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Approaches to Kashmir Studies

Editors

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EDITORIAL

Dense fog still obscures our understanding of ancient and Medieval Kashmir. Especially medieval period has been approached from divergent and mostly sectarian perspectives and modern Kashmir is already a problematic category for political historians. As of now, we have no comprehensive history of Kashmiri Religious Philosophical, Aesthetics and Literary thought. Ambitious attempts of capturing the essence of thousands of years of history are yet to be made. Kashmir still awaits its true Historians. There could be many approaches to history of a civilization, Nationalistic, communal, Marxist transcendentalist, Neo-historicist, so on. Actually all the modern approaches that have been used to study Euro-American or Asian history, could be transposed to Kashmir history. However, we find none of these approaches has been used consistently or comprehensively in this case. From Medieval times we have the legacy of royalistic and elitist account of events narrated by Kalhana and the other chroniclers who followed him. In modern era various approaches have been used by different individuals on certain selected issues in Kashmir history, but no consistent perspective is discernible in these studies. Our indigenous histories are mostly chronicles without any connecting thread of definable perspective or ideological standpoint of their authors, though one can broadly identify some elements of underlying worldview of the author concerned.

One may broadly divide approaches to Kashmir history into traditionalist religious and modernist rationalist. From Kalhan to Didmeri to Hassan Khuyhami we have traditional religious-Hindu or Islamic-approach though it can't be strictly called religious/moral approach. We have simply Sanskrit and Persian chroniclers without consistent ideological viewpoint being promulgated though one can easily identify prejudices and sympathies of these chroniclers. In the twentieth century we have a host of histories which are modernist in sensibility though their modernism is not very much foregrounded. We can see largely rationalist orientation in these accounts.

We have some good studies on 20th century Kashmir, especially political history of it but comprehensive social, cultural or economic histories of Kashmir are yet to come. We have no gender centric history either. Studies exploring questions of ethnicity and identity are in the fray. There have been some studies on isolated problems in Kashmir history and we still await a comprehensive overview of these studies. Isolated studies of Kashmir folklore, craft and other cultural themes have been made. There are also studies on the Mystical Aspects of Kashmir Culture, and on Agrarian systems. There has been also some work on Saivism and Sufism.

The Institute is committed to the mission of removing this fog surrounding the immediate as well as the remote past of Kashmir. To help unravel the authentic contribution of Kashmir in various fields of learning and scholarship and help built a history of different domains, a 3 day International seminar on the theme ***Approaches to Kashmir Studies*** was organized by the Institute during the 2006. We had a tremendous response and scholars from all over the world participated in the seminar. The papers presented in the seminar were reviewed and some of them have been selected for publication in the present volume. We hope that scholars in the field respond to this endeavor of the Institute and guide us with their critical comments.

The Papers selected for Publication have been arranged in various sub-divisions. Each sub-division represents a significant aspect of Cultural History of Kashmir and each paper says something seminal about the theme it deals with. Our readers are our best judges.

Hopefully their critical opinion would be more positive than negative. However we would value and appreciate whatever the comments of our readers are and we would be looking forward for them.

Editors

APPROACHES TO KASHMIR STUDIES STATE, SOCIETY AND IDENTITY

PROFESSOR (DR.) RIYAZ PUNJABI

I

Kashmir, in the entire South Asia, provides a fascinating subject of study in terms of history, geography, culture, identity, and society. It has the distinction of having a recorded history of over five thousand years. The historical accounts on Kashmir abound. The historical accounts as provided in *Rajatarangnis* followed by historical enumeration of eminent Chinese, Mughal, Central Asian and European scholars and travelers provide a huge corpus of physical, historical, cultural and social details on Kashmir. A great deal of scholarly studies have been carried out on different aspects of Kashmir during the last more than five decades from within and outside Kashmir. However, the scope and approaches to Kashmir studies need to be further enlarged. Moreover, there is an urgency in critically examining and evaluating whatever has been done in the field of Kashmir studies and identify the deficiency, if any, in such studies. In general terms, most of the studies on Kashmir suffer from the clarity of approach and in some of these studies deficit of objectivity is glaringly discernible. The studies equally appear to have not paid adequate attention to sociological, philosophical and ecological perspectives. The dynamics of international relations and global politics and its import on Kashmir is yet another perspective which is missing in the studies on Kashmir. In absence of these perspectives, the studies on Kashmir would not have appropriate connectivity and shall not have an effective interaction with national or international scholarship concerned with ethnicity and identity. Moreover, new tools of sociological, cultural and historical interpretation and the new methodology of analysis is a *sine qua non* to the understanding of Kashmir and hence to be applied vigorously on the studies of Kashmir. I am conscious that it is a gigantic task but the Institute for Kashmir studies has to take up this challenge.

II

In the historical context, the physical boundaries of Kashmir have waned and waxed during different intervals of its history. At one point of time, the borders of Kashmir extended up to Central Asia. In the same vein, the trade and commercial activities connected Kashmir with the outside world. The historical accounts graphically provide the details of caravans carrying merchandise across to Bukhara, Samarqand, Khotan and Sikiang in Central Asia through the borders of Kashmir. The extension of borders and trade relations of Kashmir with the outside world enormously enriched its culture and even language. The new study of these cultural and trade routes and their impact on Kashmir society should form the part of research agenda of Kashmir Studies the process of arrival and settling of people from foreign lands in Kashmir during different periods of history further accelerated the process of acculturation of Kashmir. These groups of people brought with them new arts and crafts and introduced them in the Kashmir society. The gradual introduction of new social norms through the behavior patterns of these groups introduced new elements in the social organization of Kashmir. The emergence of new social classes due to its close contacts with Central Asia provides an interesting study of social transformation of Kashmir.

III

The onset of different religious beliefs and practices endowed Kashmir with an unique identity. Buddhism, Saivism and Islam were synthesized in the value system which is reflected in many social and cultural practices of Kashmir even today. Thus, multiple layers have gone in the construction of Kashmir culture which needs to be unfolded in an objective and scientific manner. In this backdrop, Kashmir studies involve the study of the impact of different religious beliefs on society, the interaction among different mystic orders including the social role of Sufis and mystics, the folklore, the architecture, the analysis of historical and political developments and economy. I do hope that this Seminer, which has the presence of eminent scholars, while taking an interdisciplinary approach, would discuss different aspects of Kashmir.

I take this opportunity to point out, with great trepidation, that in some reflections on Kashmir, there has been an arbitrary selectivity of sources of Kashmir history. This selectivity has resulted in making sweeping generalization on Kashmir society and even passing on pejorative remarks on the character of the people. This selectivity has to be dealt with scholarship and within the academic discipline. I propose that some source material on Kashmir should be revisited which would place developments and events and the subsequent social responses to them in their proper perspective. In view of the paucity of time, I will not be able to provide a comprehensive list of these sources. However, in this regard all the *Rajatarangnis*, written by Kalhana, Jona Raja and Srivra besides the later series written by Prajaya Bhat and Sukha along with the travelogues of Chinese travelers Hieun tsang, Okang and Fa-Hian be looked into afresh in constructing a new social and political history of Kashmir. These chronicles which cover ancient period upto 16th century should be supplemented with the accounts of Alberuni, Abul Fazal and Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni along with the travelogues of European travelers including those of Arther Niev and Frederic Drew who have reflected on Kashmir society in an objective manner. Sir Walter Lawrence's account provides an important source material, apart from the projection of social and agrarian structures prevalent in Kashmir at that point of time, in comprehending the ecological changes that Kashmir has undergone over decades.

IV

It is well recognized that identity provides sufficient clues in comprehending the social and spiritual value of a society. The identity formation, in the realm of Sociology, is the result of interaction between the self and the society. The inner self of a human being, who creates self images, although autonomous, is subject to change and modifications which take place during the processes of its interaction with society. Therefore, an identity has to be analyzed in a particular social context which opens up new vistas in understanding and analyzing a particular identity. This perspective equally enables us to comprehend the transformation which a particular identity undergoes through different phases of its social and historical change. In this perspective, Kashmir identity popularly known as *Kashmiriyat* (or *Kashreut*, to put it in Kashmiri) occupies a centre stage in the studies on Kashmir. This is not to undermine the other aspects of Kashmir studies which are equally important and highly relevant.

Kashmir identity has evolved through the processes of acculturation over the centuries. The geographical location, the historical processes and political developments have contributed to its evolution and advancement.

Thus, multiple social and historical processes spread over different periods of time led to the crystallization of Kashmir identity. However, the identity did not remain dormant in any phase of history and in my reckoning this process is still continuing. In this backdrop, I have some reservations in placing Kashmir identity in the watertight compartment of primordial identities which has been the reference point of some historians and social scientists, inspired by Western experiences, to analyze the historical identities of the sub-Continent.

The inclusiveness has remained the main characteristic of Kashmir identity. This inclusiveness resulted in the absorption of other spiritual, cultural and social practices within its fold enriching it from time to time. The arrival of foreigners due to varied circumstances introduced new elements in the social structure of Kashmir endowing it with four broad characteristics of spirituality, inclusiveness, plurality and social consensus. These characteristics have remained the hallmark of Kashmir identity throughout its history. Kashmir identity, in view of its geographical location, acquired an ethnic profile which transcended religious demarcations in strict sense of the term. In fact, the onset of Reshi order particularly in the vast rural landscape of Kashmir provided the basis for a spiritual unity in which there was no scope for social friction. The different modes of religious practices not only co-existed side by side but there was equally an overlap of these practices at the social levels. It needs to be recognized that it is not merely a' baggage of History which Kashmiris carry on their shoulders' as is held by some scholars. Rather, it is an intrinsic component of their identity. The 'spiritual' component of Kashmir identity has to be grasped distinctly from the 'religious', in literal sense of the term. Thus, when Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani or Nund Rishi aspired for the spiritual status of Lal Ded, the spiritual icon of Kashmir Saivism, it was in the realm of spirituality and not in religion. The common language, Kashmiri, cemented the bonds between the people further. Thus, the ethno-cultural-linguistic-spiritual cohesion was starkly reflected in Kashmir identity. The shared historical experiences of foreign occupation, oppression and exploitation further bound them together. That tyranny and oppression of foreign rulers did not make exceptions except that the collaborators have received scant attention of scholars. The attempts to impose religious tenets in strict terms were resisted by the people who continued to be guided by the spiritual and social methodology prescribed by the Rishis of the Valley.

V

It is important to note that there was a convergence of cultural, spiritual and political components of Kashmir identity. However, with the expansion and consolidation of new political boundaries of Kashmir which was brought about during Dogra rule in the middle of 19th Century, in which Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh emerged as a single political entity, new cultural identities emerged on the social scene of Kashmir. These identities have co-existed along with the Kashmir identity. However, in view of the historical, geographical and cultural significance of Kashmir, the Kashmir identity maintained its centrality in the entire state of Jammu & Kashmir. This identity remained at the centre of the struggle against autocratic Dogra rule in the state. However, the struggle against autocratic Dogra Rule acquired new nuances when other cultural identities of Jammu and Kashmir State, cutting across the religious boundaries, joined the struggle. It may be mentioned here that the consolidation of Jammu & Kashmir state as a single political entity expanded the base of social structure in Kashmir and resulted in an interface between Kashmir identity and other identities in the state. However, there is no evidence of any antagonism among these identities in the state.

In the post-Independence phase of Jammu & Kashmir state, the people belonging to the state acquired the status of a single political identity in the constitutional terms. In fact, this identity had been bestowed upon the inhabitants of the state legally and politically under the State Subject Regulation promulgated by the last Maharaja of the state, Maharaja Hari Singh, in the year 1927. This regulation continues to be in force in the state in its post-independence phase. The recognition of seven languages as the regional languages of the state under the Sixth Schedule of Jammu & Kashmir constitution resulted in the *de jure* and constitutional recognition of seven cultural groups in the state. These cultural groups share many elements with Kashmir Identity. However, they are distinguished mainly by the linguistic differences amongst themselves. These identities have been asserting at the cultural levels for their cultural advancement and development which has been facilitated by the institutional mechanism of Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, which has been set up according to the directive of Article 146 of Jammu and Kashmir constitution. These identities are equally asserting at the political level for empowerment and participation. Thus, Kashmir identity has been placed in the constellation

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of other identities in the state. Therefore, Kashmir identity, at least at the political level, has to compete with other identities. In view of the democratic experience of the last about sixty years, these identities have cooperated and accommodated each other. They have jointly taken initiatives toward political action. These identities have to expand their convergence in which the identity of the Jammu and Kashmir state would emerge as a new composite identity. Kashmir Identity has to devise mechanisms to ensure equilibrium with other cultural identities of the state.

VI

It is relevant to have a brief estimation of the status of Kashmir Identity. The indicators point out that for quite some time now, a process of fragmentation of Kashmir identity has set in. in the course of new processes of planning and economic development, and with the introduction of new administrative system, the process of fragmentation was bound to happen. The new economic and administrative processes resulted in the emergence of new identities viz; bureaucratic, professional and commercial, adding new dimensions to Kashmir identity. In the meanwhile, other developments impinging upon the profile of Kashmir identity have been taking place. Due to many local, national and international factors, attempts are being made toward the sharpening of the religious edge of the identity. This development has the potential of incorporating the exclusiveness in the identity and ultimately leading to its isolation in the larger national and international context. The another alarming fact is the gradual loss of Kashmiri language which forms the core of ***Kashmiriyat***. The empirical evidence points out that other language are gradually replacing Kashmiri as a language of communication even at the personal and domestic levels. The new generation is gradually loosing proficiency in Kashmiri language, hence resulting in loosing their moorings which are rooted in traditions and social and cultural values of Kashmir. It is axiomatic that language is the carrier and constitutes the mode of transmitting traditions and cultural values from one generation to the another. The exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley has further added to the denudation of Kashmir identity.

Kashmir identity appears to be at the crossroads of its history. It has to redefine itself in the existential social realities of its present times. More than that, vigorous attempts have to be made to restore oxygen to it which would provide vital nourishment to its social and cultural survival. This oxygen is the Kashmiri language. In the same vein, the assimilative and accommodative edges of Kashmir identity need to be sharpened in order to restore its vibrant cultural profile. This profile would provide it enough strength for its assertion.

VII

In conclusion, Kashmir studies should not remain oblivious to the emergence of new social classes in Kashmir. It would be interesting to understand the processes of negotiation between the new social classes and Kashmir identity and the vice versa. It is equally relevant to develop an understanding on the interplay between Kashmir identity and civil society. Needless to mention here that Kashmir has a well articulated and vibrant civil society. The emergence of social movements is another important issue in the study of societies. The status of social movements, particularly in the areas of gender, environment and social anomolies, in Kashmir deserve the attention of scholars. In this era of globalization, the relationship between market and society has emerged as a new theme. This relationship with specific reference to Kashmir needs to be harnessed adequately. I believe that these perspectives would go a long way in filling the gaps in the studies on Kashmir.

Multidisciplinary Approach and the Construction of Cultural History

M. Ashraf Wani

Those of us who are aware of the literature produced on Kashmir's past and present would perhaps join me to begin this presentation with an unpleasant note that the Kashmir culture still awaits a scholarly treatment notwithstanding a huge mass of material collected under the auspices of J and K Academy of Art, Culture and languages. Indeed, the scholarly contribution to the Kashmir culture has not moved beyond the collection of some facts, even in the face of revolutionary developments in the approach, method, content, problems and ambitions of the discipline. Since like any other subject, the fundamental purpose of cultural studies is not only to capture the subject in totality but, more so, to make an analytical study of it, I, in the interest of beginners in the subject thought that it would be better to present some tentative and disjointed through drawn from various sources on the methodology of writing a cultural history.

It is commonplace that culture is the product of a web of factors, but all these factors are human factors; therefore the first prerequisite for an analytical understanding of the multidimensionality of culture is to fully equip oneself with the science of this complex species called man, both as a human being with mutually antagonistic innate predispositions, impulses and instincts, and as a social being, influenced, if not changed, by the physical and its own created environment. There is, however, no psychie unity of mankind except for a few shared traits with differing intensities. It is, therefore, imperative for a student of culture to establish a close laison with all those disciplines, theories and philosophies which furnish insight about the behavior of humans and their creations or, to be more specific, about why and how a cultural artifact originated or came into existence, and what shapes it acquired in changing milieus and why. The insights to this effect are provided by psychology, anthropology, ethnology, sociology, philology, geography, economics and a variety of theories and philosophers including the specific cultural theories. The student of culture needs to be sufficiently grounded in the insights offered by interdisciplinary approach to enable him in identifying the significant material and working out a nuanced construct.

For example, the social anthropology focuses on the trajectory of cultures, the *raison d'etre* of their emergence, change, development, diffusion or decline; the structure and functioning of a cultural item, the systems and counter systems born out of the interaction of different cultural artifacts, the existence of plurality of cultures, the culture of elites and the culture of masses and their reciprocal influences, disparity of endurance between different cultural structure, plurality of time rhythms, awareness of losses associated with modernization by the literate elites, role of ritual in social life, and, last but not least, extracting meanings from the symbolic content of action.

Similarly the historical anthropology and social psychology underlines the importance of the conceptions and feelings of people (in a given society) about life, their beliefs, ways of thinking, social and aesthetic values, attitude to nature, experience of time and space, ideas about death and the other world, their interpretation of ages in human life etc collectively called 'model of the world,' 'world picture' or more popularly' mentality. 'The mentality constitutes a moving force behind the behavior of people. We see that all stimuli proceeding from the political, economic and social spheres invariably pass through the prisms of mentality in which they receive distinctive illumination, and only in this transformed (and often to the extent that they are unrecognizable) aspect do they become the moving forces of human behavior. Therefore, the central concern of the researcher should be the mentality/world picture of the people no matter how irrational and exotic these might be from the point of view of contemporary 'common sense'.

In the same vain, the intellectual exchange with geography, economics, demography, political philosophy and philology would considerable enrich our understanding about the role of geography, social forces, economic factors, population dynamics, power, language and diffusion in the shaping our culture and the internal coherence of its varied structures. To be sure, the engagement with wide range of other disciplines would assist in diversifying the focus and enriching the method and orientation by borrowing and deploying concepts and models in the interest of qualitative approach.

No less rewarding are the insights drawn from theories, especially those which caused innovations and ruptures within broader theoretical and philosophical paradigms. The insights provided by Marxist historiography by establishing relationship between economic structure of society and culture as well as by searching the cultural roots of resistance and subordination considerably enriched the kit of analytical tools of a cultural historian.

The neo-Marxists like Gramsci consider culture as an independent structure, and emphasize its pre-emirent role in establishing hegemony by one group over other groups. One of the principal ways in which social leadership is contested is through the appropriation of culture by the dominant class to create a new national popular collective will in which it will be the hegemonic force. Thus a new insight in search for cultural history.

The post-modernist turn offers a new orientation to cultural history such as shift from ideas to power friendship as the fundamental unit for analysis in cultural history, role of culture in the formation of modern nation state, studying different cultural epochs within the framework of their respective broader cultural codes that order different modes of discourse such as governance, law, theology, moral philosophy, literature, art, architecture, costume, stage, design, science of various types etc. by contesting totalizing perspective in history and society the post modernism encouraged local narratives, plurality of cultures multicausal approach giving culture an individual position and functioning though without dislocating it from the total context. It also showed how the dominant ideology uses its power and resources to appropriate or suppress the alternative discourses and how different kinds of discourses interact, contradict distablize, cancel or modify each other. Post modernism gives importance to the interacting web of human emotions and instincts, inequality and incessant struggle in shaping life. And by rejecting the enlightenment discourse based on reason it gave importance to irrational which finds expression in different cultural forms, and by contesting the other pillar of enlightenment edifice namely progress, postmodernism prompted revisiting approvingly the cultural heritage, all the forms of cultural difference which survived in the colonial situation, and all the spheres of indigenous though and experience which have escaped or resisted the pervasive hold of enlightenment rationalism, western modernity and the nation state. It promoted the private or domestic as opposed to public, the artistic or the affective as opposed to rational, communal, local and marginal as opposed to the nation-infact everything that is anti-model. Again post-modernist critique has had a liberating influence in that it has shown that there are aspects of social inequality other than class namely gender and ethnicity.

As per the recent critical and cultural theory, no longer is it possible to assume that meaning can be securely located within a cultural artifact itself or in the intentions of its original producers. While such an investigation is still valuable, other considerations are equally important. Hence writing history of a cultural artifact such as written texts, visual texts, material objects or social practices and institutions involve examining what is known is system of production signification and reception. The production involves authorship-individual or collective-its mode of bringing before the public and its contemporary historical and cultural context. The system of signification include the formal connections within which the artifact was produced such as literary language, style of painting, film genre etc. Regarding the traditional historians' innocence about the interference of signification in making objectivity a distant dream, the postmodernist would taunt the former saying "Historians in particular have at times read the artifacts that they treat as sources as if they were transparent windows onto an aspect of the past paying little or no attention to their generic construction"

The reception of the artifact involves study both of how it was received and "read" by contemporaries, and of the various meanings attached to it later in changing historical circumstances.

Having acknowledged the significance of theories for writing the cultural history. We must, however, remember that theories too are cultural artifacts, whose own geneses, conventions and receptions need to be explored textually and historically. Such contextualization works to avoid placing a theory in a privileged position as an analytical tool.

To conclude, the interdisciplinary approach and the insights from philosophies and theories did not only revitalize the contents of cultural history, but it extended the historians sources well beyond the conventional document to the widest range of written and unwritten evidence to enable him to cover a whole range of phenomena from rational to irrational and from material structures to the secret and the unconscious, besides refusing to accept the 'facts' at their face value or to make history simply a scissors and paste dossier.

Kashmir Studies: Identifying Areas of Concern for Social Sciences

Noor Ahmad Baba

While referring to the areas of concern for Social Sciences in the context of Kashmir, we need to keep in mind that the human societies across communities, regions and nations have broadly similar issues and problems to deal with. It is so because the contours of social existence are by and large similar across borders. However, there always is a contextual variation defined by the objective placement of different societies that makes each one of these unique in a number of respects. Difference can occur on account of the nature of the objective situation of such problems along with their subjective characterization determined by socio-cultural and socio- psychological make-up of the people that constitute these societies in conjunction with the geo- physical context within which these operate.

We also need to remember that the social realities are generally multidimensional and complex. These need to be dealt with objectively, from an interdisciplinary perspective and at the level of appropriate methodological sophistication suited to study such issues meaningfully. Social realities cannot be divided and dealt within separate compartments. Most of the problems that Kashmiri society is confronted with today require an interdisciplinary approach to address them meaningfully and comprehensively. Therefore, in addition to our conventional disciplinary areas of study we need to focus on promoting coordinative efforts in dealing with some such problems. We need to exhibit methodological relevance suited to each one of these problems. We also need to realize that in today's world no place and country can be understood in isolated from the larger context either at regional or at the global level. Be it issues of economy, politics, society, culture etc, or addressing other problems that humanity is confronted with on account of environment, practice of human rights, issues of disarmament, prevention of epidemics and other forms of diseases, dealing with violence and promoting peace across communities and nations, addressing economic and social disparity and promoting an order that is fair and just.

Another challenge for social sciences in Kashmir is to go beyond conventional approach to conventional problems. There are facets that we have been ignoring in the past that need to be attended to with greater seriousness and innovation. For example, conventionally we approached democracy simply in terms of institutional mechanism but today we need to look into that how far democratization process contributes to the empowering weaker and marginalized sections of the society. Under the legal façade of liberty, equality, justice and empowerment, repression of traditionally inherited authoritarian order at the level of family, society, caste, gender, classes, very often reinforced by one another, has continued to exist. Elite democracies cannot serve at a time when awareness among the disadvantaged sections is growing. We may note that in order to ensure viability of a governing structure, we must make a serious effort to remove deep differentials of power, wealth, education, social position, security and honor of a person. There should be credible rule of law, appropriate opportunity and equal access to social good and not disparities of income, consumption, wealth and status. It is a matter of fact that India has remained a fractured democracy and has democratic institutions that have gone through a process of erosion. Large sections of people have remained bereft of the benefits of Justice and democratic fair play. This requires a social scientist to be more pro-active to find answers to some such questions. In the context of Kashmir the challenge is much bigger as in our case democracy in its minimums, application of fairness of elections, competitive politics ensuring elite circulation and accountability has left a lot more desirable.

In addition, we also have a challenge in Kashmir that requires us to understand and appreciate the nature of problem that we are confronted with, sources of discord and methodology of addressing them for finding lasting peace within the state and in the larger region of South-Asia. In terms of its origin and dimensions, Kashmir has been a complex problem. It is rooted in the multiplicity of objective historical factors and there are different layers of its manifestations. It has engaged the two major countries of the region viz. India and Pakistan, from the very time of their emergence into independent existence. Kashmiri people during this six decades long period of political uncertainty, divergent claims, division and high degree of employed coercion have suffered the worst. The two countries involved in the dispute also suffered a number of economic, political, strategic and diplomatic disadvantages on account of its unsettled character. They have tried their best to undermine each other in all aspects of their existence as members of international community till 1998, when both the countries carried out nuclear explosions that in itself demonstrated the limits of their confrontation. There is need to grasp the contours and dimensions of this problem and try to find out ways and means of addressing it.

The first step in addressing a problem with a view of resolving it is to admit its existence and understand it in its different dimensions. Fortunately, today people across the subcontinent and the world admit the existence of the Kashmir problem and the need for its resolution. Most people concerned with this issue admit its existence and complexity but differences surface as soon as we come to the contours of what constitutes this problem and the elements that could contribute to its resolution. Therefore, there are still serious differences on how this problem is to be addressed to the satisfaction of its core party, the people of Kashmir, and India and Pakistan. In spite of some progress, the mindsets on the two sides have not changed in tune with the changing scenario of peace building and the historical direction of the contemporary times. A lot has to be done for arriving at an acceptable solution of the problem. Coercion does not solve political problems. History is a treasure house of human experiences from which we need to draw relevant lessons and inspirations. But progress requires us not to get stuck in the past. Social scientists need to be creative while handling such issues.

The violent manifestation of Kashmir as an internal problem is to a great extent caused by non-empathetic and very often hostile attitude of Indian state and the civil society towards the happenings in Kashmir well from 1947. Kashmir has been historically characterized as a very tolerant, peaceful and even one of the docile societies in the world. Prior to 1989 eruption of militancy, Kashmiris were known for their civility, tolerance, accommodativeness and intrinsic secular character. At the core of it Kashmiri society still retains these qualities. Some people suggest that militancy is only an external factor in Kashmir. But as the facts stand violence in Kashmir in late 80's emerged more as an indigenous phenomenon with tremendous amount of local support and acceptability. External factor came much later. No external factor also can work unless there is an objective situation on ground. However, whatever its causes may be, its consequences are mostly undesirable and harmful to the general society. We, the people of Kashmir, have undergone the traumas associated with violence. In all these years of violence, Kashmiri society has suffered physically, mentally, psychologically, economically and socially. There are huge areas of work for social scientists to undertake in order to understand the causes and the consequences of this cycle of violence and the repressive surroundings that operate here and the measures that are needed for rehabilitation at different levels. Some work has already been done but in view of the enormity of the problem much more needs to be done by civil society groups drawn from India and abroad. Kashmiri society and its genuine human concerns have been misrepresented and misunderstood. There is need to promote a more empathetic appreciation of the situation.

History is replete with examples when many historically significant changes occurred due to the violent struggles. American war of independence, French and many other revolutions involved a violent public uprising. But in the contemporary situation, use of violence is not a right strategy to adopt for a number of reasons. Today's state compared to past is categorized as total state with tremendous coercive capacity reinforced by very efficient information and the communication technology. It is also because, particularly in post 9/11 context, anti state private violence stands universally de-legitimized by the dominant forces globally. This leaves any violent movement whatever legitimate and noble cause it might be pursuing, bereft of any moral, more so of material support. Consequently it allows the state with full jurisdiction to use its full coercive machinery to suppress any movement with whatever mass support, if it is able to successfully colour the movement as violent. All such private violence in the contemporary world is universally dubbed as terrorism. Therefore, in today's world any movement for changing the status quo needs to be led with tremendous care and high levels of intellectual sophistication. This, in my opinion, is the weakest point of the political discourse in Kashmir. For example steadfastness is a quality but needs to be combined with right kind of strategy. Lenin in one of his writings had made a significant statement where he says that for two steps forward we some times need to take a step back. In fact we have examples in history that suggest that some times a tactical move backward has taken movements forward in paradigmic proportions. Adversities do not hold negatives only. In fact, every adversity may be pregnant with a potential opportunity. Great men in history became great because they were able to transform adversity into an opportunity. In this context social scientists need to be creative and should be able to generate ideas and knowledge that has relevance to problems that we are faced with.

One of the dimensions of Kashmir issue has been the fact of the Kashmir being pushed to a status of secluded periphery by the 1947 political development. The division of Indian sub-continent, de facto division of Jammu and Kashmir and the placement of its two parts under the actual control of two different and hostile states, and the resultant hardening of borders, pushed the valley of Kashmir and its surrounding regions to a number of social, psychological, political and economic disadvantages. During 1947-48 the Jammu and Kashmir got divided between what is known as Indian and Pakistani controlled Kashmir. After the 1962 Chinese aggression, the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir is practically divided into three parts. Out of the total of 222,236 sq. km of what used to be Jammu and Kashmir till 1947, Pakistan holds 78,114 sq. km i.e. about 35 percent of the territory. China with 42,735 sq. km holds about 20 percent of the territory. Not many people know that what is shown Jammu and Kashmir as Indian territory in the maps is not what India actually holds. India controls only 101,383 sq. km i.e. only about 45 percent of the total territory indicated on the Indian maps. These developments not only did separate different parts of the state from the surrounding countries but different regions within the state and even regions on each side of the Line of Control were cut off from one another.

Thus the 1947 developments pushed Kashmir from the center to a sort of isolation and seclusion. Almost all of its major connecting points were blocked and Kashmir became dependent on a highway that had never been considered reliable in comparison to roads and connections that historically connected it with the rest of the world. This seclusion had a lot of emotional and psychological implications for the people of Kashmir, the families divided on two sides of the Line of Control (LoC) was in itself a human tragedy. This has been one of the greatest disadvantages that Kashmir has suffered because of its post 1947 political placement. This disadvantage has also been shared by its surrounding regions like Kargil and Leh and Punch-Rajouri which continue to suffer communication disadvantage. The disadvantages of political uncertainty and impact of on-going conflict on the place created its own predicaments and problems of serious nature for the people of Kashmir. We need to find ways and means of finding answers to this seclusion by a mechanism of soft borders, cross border institutional arrangements and through the South Asian framework for cooperation. In our context, we need to realize that 1947/1948 framework of addressing issues is becoming irrelevant in the context of the emerging scenario. In 1947 the countries of the region were erecting borders in the backdrop of the prevalent hatred, and on the edifice of violence, destruction, bloodshed and death. That was the time we were conditioned by the notion of aggressive nationalism and stiff borders defining national interest. Today, interdependence and softer borders are defining advantages for countries.

Today the challenge for us in the South Asia is to undermine these dividing lines and soften them for promoting peace, cooperation, human development and dignity of all people and communities across South Asia. We need to join our efforts for improving health, education and the security status of our people. Today it will be going against the currents of history to aim at erecting borders and barriers in the context in which our task has to be undermining the already existing ones. For this it is important that Kashmir issue is addressed in its different dimensions and the manifestations. Its historically held place of being connected from different directions needs to be restored to it. Its de facto division since 1947 has to be undone under some institutional/structural arrangement. Avenues of the economic and social development of the region have to be strengthened, and political empowerment restored to its people. These could be elements of a solution that we need to strive for within an emerging South Asian reality that is likely to define the region in the coming future. I would submit that ingenuity is needed to address different dimensions of the problem. We are still stuck with serious road blocks in the march to peace and cooperation. But that should not define our future destiny as people in the region. A new vision of South Asia needs to guide us on this. In the words of A. B. Vajpayee, former Prime Minister of India, in the path of peace and for a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem, we need not "traverse only on the beaten track of the past. Mindsets will have to be altered and historical baggage jettisoned." Let us remember that we in Kashmir have the greatest stakes in peace and cooperative order in South Asia to be able to over-come the disadvantages we have suffered as a result of 1947 and the subsequent developments. We need this peace and cooperation to restore Kashmir to its due place and safeguard the natural assets that Kashmir is bestowed with by nature in abundance.

Environment has become a global concern because the future of the mankind has got linked to its security. In Kashmir the environment is much more important concern because the nature has been generous in giving it precious assets. It has been generally compared with Switzerland in terms of its ecological assets and natural beauty. While these assets are secure in Switzerland which prides for its neutrality and the initiatives for demilitarization, in Kashmir it is vulnerable because of the conflict and heavy presence of the troops. Let us venture to address Kashmir in all its dimensions and thereby help to shape up a new South Asia. A South Asia that is free from violence and where peaceful coexistence and cooperation defines the relationship between the countries and the communities. Where borders are only points of reference and identification and not barriers of hatred and the sources of discord.

After decolonization, the international community has not succeeded in undoing several of the distortions and disparities introduced by colonial intervention. International community today is beset with glaring disparities of wealth, consumption, technology, status of health and positions of power. These disparities retain within it a real challenge to peace, prosperity and happiness of the global community. Much of what happens in the shape of what we call global terrorism is outcome of some of this real and perceived unjust global order. Globalization is also seen by many as a mechanism of extending and consolidating the hegemony of the strong political and economic interests at the global level. Even internally the disparities in the distribution of social goods and economic resources, and socio-political dislocations have resulted in violent dissent. In this context proliferation of the small and medium level weapons have contributed to human insecurities. Violence as a mechanism of addressing issues involves tremendous risks for human survival both at local and international levels. This, in the post war years, has prompted academic community, particularly in the context of the west, to develop the discipline of Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies to understand conflicts, their constituents so that proper strategies can be evolved to address situations of actual and potential conflicts. In Kashmir, in spite of the on going conflict and its negative consequences not much has been done to develop and use this approach.

European countries after having suffered the calamities of the conflicts realized the value of living in peace and harmony. Europe has made a number of strides in evolving a new paradigm of relationship of living in peace and cooperation, finding mechanisms of handling conflicts and thereby creating a new example of relationship for rest of the world. This continent that till world war second was seen as the bloodiest region of the world has emerged as a major zone of peace, tranquility, reconciling individual nationalism to collective and cooperative living. Today's Europe should define the evolving order that the other regions of the world need to follow. This should be the course, that South-Asia need to take in the coming years. South-Asia is socially and geographically much more defined region with a shared history of living together in greater harmony and peace than many other regions of the world. Many of the problems that South-Asia is confronted with today were caused by colonial intervention. Today, South-Asia is beset with a number of conflicts at different levels caused by unequal distribution of resources, disparities in social placements or for lack of serious effort for evolving mechanisms of living in peace as communities and countries. Kashmir has been the most serious problem that has undermined the peace, tranquility and normal living of its people.

Traditionally State-Centric notions of security had pushed common person to a number of disadvantages, in terms of his/her personal security. Security was seen mainly in terms of the territorial security of a country, generally from an external threat. It sanctified borders more than the human life and dignity, and subjugated citizen to state and its institutional manifestations. In essence, it often amounted to elite/ ruling class security. The concept of human security that gained currency in post cold war years has restored the human being to the rightful place within the discourse of security at least at the conceptual level so far. The proponents of this view challenge the traditional notions of national security by arguing that the proper reference for security should be the human rather than a state. We as social scientists in Kashmir need to focus on this approach. This view holds that a people-centred view of security is necessary for national, regional and global stability. It was the noted economist Dr. Mahbub ul Haq who first drew global attention to the concept of human security in the United Nations Development Programme's 1994 Human Development

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Report and sought to influence the UN's 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen. Since then, human security has been receiving more attention from the key global development institutions. So, the 1994 Human Development Report is considered a milestone publication in the field of human security, with its argument that ensuring "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" for all persons is the best path to tackle the problem of global insecurity.' The Report argues that the scope of global security should be expanded to include threats in seven areas of individual's vulnerability. This asserted that along side securing the national borders, there is need to ensure the security of man in terms of his economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political needs and dimensions.

After the breakdown of the former Soviet Union, Samuel Huntington developed new thesis of "Clash of Civilizations" which maintained that the breakdown of the Soviet Union does not necessarily mean the west will remain unchallenged from the Islamic, Chinese and other civilizations. We have seen violent groups getting activated in number of regions, religions wise so constituted, that it seemed to reaffirm clashes along the civilizational fault lines. This culminated in the 9/11 and subsequent response in Afghanistan and Iraq. The situation got so confused and blurred that practically it occasionally was given colour of clash between faiths particularly by the dominant global powers lead by the former US President George W Bush. Fingers started to be pointed towards the Muslims and Islam. Muslims were accused of being violent and emotionally surcharged, and mostly responsible for violence across the world. However, when we go deeper into the incidence of violence involving Muslims, it is easier to discern the political causes of these violent incidents. Most of these have objective political causes. In the vitiated atmosphere, the relation between communities deteriorated further and globally situation became bad and chaotic. Globally some sensible and concerned people started speaking in terms of bridging the gap between the religious communities and rebuilding relationship of trust and understanding between the communities. It is being increasingly realised that mankind cannot afford the continuous discord that only contributed to global uncertainties and universal insecurity. The US might along with the support of its NATO allies failed to enforce peace on its own terms in Iraq and Afghanistan. These states continue to pay a heavy price for their intervention in the two states. This situation has forced the realisation that mankind cannot afford the continuous conflict along the civilisational fault lines.

Attempts are being made to end this vicious circle of violent conflict. President Obama's Cairo speech in June 2009 was an outcome of this realisation. A new concept of an interfaith dialogue has gained global currency and has got the stamp from United Nations. In this regard, this is historically vindicated that against the common prevalent notions, Islam has always stood for religious tolerance and interfaith understanding. In this regard, Kashmir has optimised this culture of interfaith peace and understanding in which the Rishi Tradition of Kashmir has played a very important role. There is tremendous scope for building on this tradition of inter-cultural and inter-faith harmony. This is so particularly because Kashmir is a meeting point where four great religious traditions meet and extend beyond across stretches of land with continental proportions. It is here in Kashmir that the contiguous Islamic tradition moves from valley in the north into Central Asia and in the west across Pakistan into Middle East and beyond into North Africa up to the extremes of Maghrib into Morocco as a contiguous stretch of land dominated by the Islamic faith. In the east Buddhist traditions spread from Ladakh, Tibet, China into South East Asia and towards east into extremes of the East Asia up to Japan inside the pacific ocean. Birth place of Sikh faith and the place of its largest concentration Punjab is linked to J&K in south. Hinduism stretches from Jammu, across India into the Indian ocean into the Northern Sri Lanka and Mauritius. This is a privilege that hardly any other place can claim. It places responsibility in Kashmir to build on this tradition.

As stated earlier, there has been the tendency to linking violence with Islam and Muslims. We as human beings tend to have short memory. These days we see a lot of violence coming mainly from Muslims and think that probably it is rooted in the religion Islam. We need to realize that even in the contemporary situations employment of violence has not been confined to Muslim community alone. There is violence happening in other communities as well. We have examples of extremely violent conflicts in Sri-lanka, Northeastern states and other Naxal infested areas in India, Northern Ireland, South Africa and several other parts of the African Continent and the Latin America within and among communities that are not Muslim. We have also forgotten the fact that severest violence during the previous few centuries occurred in Europe or in Asia and Africa at the hands of the Europeans. This included the destruction caused during the two great wars in the 20th century and the rise of fascism and the brutalities caused by Hitler. But we never say that that violence in Europe came from the religion of its people. We as historians try to trace the objective causes of this violence in Europe. Therefore, similarly today we also need to try to locate objective causes of contemporary violence and fanaticism even where Muslims get involved. We also need to realize that some of the causes of violence and extremism have been rooted in colonial legacy and contemporary practices of some powers acting on narrow view of their national interests and the vulgar way of pursuing them. Let us also keep in mind that Afghanistan and Iraq, which today seem to be infested by severe violence, were peaceful before external forces (Soviets, 1977/78 and the Americans, 2003) intervened in the two countries respectively without any legitimate reason. We also need to realize that Muslim world also does not constitute a unified whole. Muslim world is also plural in its constitution and responses. There is tremendous heterogeneity in the Muslims on account of the race, levels of socio political and cultural development, languages, interests, methodologies and practices.

Even as Muslims we need to realize that the West is also not a single entity in politics and interests. We have seen that on the issue of the US invasion of Iraq, Europe by and large did not side with the United States. The EU is now in a quite different phase of peaceful and the collaborative living. We as social scientists should, therefore, look objectively as to why violence is happening in a certain situation. We should also not forget that there is plurality, both within the Muslim world and in the West. An important question for us to answer is that what are objective causes of extremist ideas and behavior and how to address that? We should also stop categorizing and avoid putting all responses in one category. There is need to view each side with certain degree of empathy so that we are able to identify ways and means of addressing each other's concerns in the interest of the common good and for breaking the vicious circle of mistrust and violence. We also need to realize that there is strong need to overcome fanaticism and extremism and end of the discourse of violence within Muslims in the interest of the community's own good. This can be done by promoting the correct understanding of Islam in line with its emphasis on the moderation found in the tradition of the Prophet's teachings and practice. In this context, Kashmir can contribute a lot, in terms of its syncretic heritage, in promoting the dialogue and understanding among communities. There is need to focus on the Shaik-ul-Alam, his heritage and culture of tolerance and peaceful co-existence within the Kashmiri society. We must see into how this tradition would be relevant for global initiatives for interfaith dialogue and understanding as it is emerging a major concern of international community today in the face of growing mistrust and strife across communities and countries both locally and globally.

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No Naga Presence In Ancient Kashmir

The Past Never Is [1]

Gulshan Majeed

A journey into past is always fascinating and challenging. In spite of its presumed fixity in a particularly given space-time continuum it is elusive. The material and non- material expressions of the past remain perpetually virgin for newer and newer engagements, helping the formulation of new interpretations and re-interpretations. Fresh representations from past coupled with regrouping of the evidence in hand demand fresh approach to old issues and a fresh consideration of the terminology used to define those issues.

The present paper, as is evident by the title given to it, endeavours to counter the belief, so ritualistically held about the Naga presence in Kashmir at some remove in time, and the arguments constructed in favour of the belief repeated with an aura of authenticity

The traditional source material, for any understanding of early Kashmir including mythic and/ or legendary account of the Nagas, their exploits with their counter parts, the Pischachas and advent of humans is, in the first place *Nilmatpurana* [2], so reverentially referred to by the scholars including Kalhana (12th century C.E) working in the pre and proto historic Kashmir. This socio- cultural treatise[3] which never the less, betrays the interpolations and later filiations and additions belongs to a period when Brahmans, mostly settled in Kashmir by the successive rulers for various reasons which are amply clear by the narration associated with their settlement, given in the *Rajatarangini*[4] (Bk 1,2,3 in particular) ,were trying to regroup and re-establish themselves as the sole custodians of past knowledge and the supreme authority to interpret the rituals and preside over the ceremonies , the role denied to them by the Buddhists for long[5]

The *Nilmatpurana,* in association with the events, persons and sites mentioned therein, forwards rituals whose real import and way of execution is known only to the Brahmans. As the efficacy of a ritual rests in its proper execution, Brahmans moved to the centre stage in the socio- politico-economic life of the people.

Nilmatpurana refurbishes the geographical entities, otherwise mute constants, with the variables drawn and recasted, as required, from the grand Indian narratives made popular and sacred by the introduction of man –gods in the action concerned [6]

Nilmatpurana, thus, needs be understood as the extension of the general Brahmanic lore [7]of India which eulogizes the Brahmanism and creates an appropriate ideology in favour of Aryan settlers of the Gangetic plains and legitimizes their expansion programme at the cost of the people who are summarily dismissed as lowly placed forest dwellers, under the generic term Naga [8]. The hostilities of the early days, between the two, softened to a considerable level once the Aryans consolidated their position and presumed to have had their supremacy established and their superiority accepted by the other. Though still apprehensive of and at guard against Nagas, Aryans slowly began to recognize them as their counterparts in the trade of certain selective items.[9] The trade contacts paved the way for better understanding and more symbiotic relations between the two [10]. The subjugation of the Nagas, not complete through invasion became more or less possible mainly through the activities and corresponding belief systems of wandering, forest dwelling (*vanprast*) Brahmans. Matrimonial alliances between Nagas and Brahmans, Aryans and Kshatriyas are well attested by the narratives concerned and recognized by the priestly class. However the early bards and the Aryan lore still shy-away from any mention of Aryan brides for Naga grooms.[11] Naga ancestry, claimed by a number of Brahmans and non-brahman Aryans, could not in any way deprive the claimant of his rightful place and function in the society [12]. Indra, [13] who only in the immediate past was worshipped as one of the supreme Aryan gods and considered the destroyer of the enemy forts, became the protector of the Nagas, who nevertheless retained their cult and cultural field of influence. Their prestige and significance was soon recognized by the conscience keepers of the Aryans — the Brahmans who had to develop appropriate frames to explain away the Aryan expeditions to annihilate Nagas[14]. The late redactions of *Mahabharta*[15] are provided with a new frame[16], stating with a kind of appreciation, if not with any approval, the Naga cults and myths besides the glorification of Naga genealogies[17]. But all Brahmanic literature including the *Great Epics* and *Puranas* fail to exhibit any consistency in their approach and attitude towards Nagas[18] for the reasons of having been composed in segments [19] by different bards/ Brahmans under different conditions, according to the general socio- political situation of their times besides the composers were associated with various cultural identities at variance with each other and uncompromising to allow any more space to the opponents. The Aryan society was no more homogeneous, there were contradictions within, so new alliances and new challenges required fresh legitimizing doctrines. Thus fortunes of the Nagas vis-a-vis Aryans always remained fluid. It is in this light that we have to understand the action taken by the king Sagara[20], as mentioned in the *Harivamsa*, to debar the Nagas, along with other Kshtriya tribes, from their right to read Vedas and perform sacrifice. He also expels them from his country.

Harivamsa is offered as a supplement to the *Mahabharta* and comprises the portion where Lord Krishna is introduced [21] and occasion created to justify his onslaught against the Nagas. Thus we find the Aryans and Nagas living in close proximity to each other in and around the Gangetic plains with the extensions towards North-West, Sapta Sindhu and East(indo-Nepalese frontier).[22] The Bharatwar changed much of the landscape. The general consequences of *Bharta war* were, in the first place, not the unity but the initiation of a process of disintegration, _____ as the after war measures many communities including some groups of Brahmans as well as, tribes and nationalities were expelled or excommunicated from the fold _____[23], and secondly a new realization in the allies and opponents both, about their strength and self esteem and a sense of urgency on their part to forge unity and fill the vacuum created [24]. Raja Janamjeya's (II) serpent sacrifice indirectly implies the rise of Naga power in the river settlements of the Yammuna and Campa [25] and beyond, on the Indo Nepal border. The War left much exposed which needed reformation and explanation. Vedic doctrines proved insufficient to contain people and sustain the regimes hence non-Vedic rituals and non-Vedic deities began to find the favour of Brahmans and rulers alike[26].

Buddhism tried to address and shape the people's loss of faith in the infallibility of the heroes, efficacy of Brahmanic doctrines and sanctity of the existing institutions besides summing up the individual and collective efforts of the Sramaṇas into a world view which promoted liberation through the understanding of the cause of suffering [27]. The communities which had been, all along on the receiving end were encouraged to enter the fold or given sympathetic consideration[28]. Towards achieving a semblances of fraternity Buddhist lore found Buddha, a good Naga in some previous birth[29]. Gain of Buddhism was the loss of Brahmanism. Buddhists worked silently towards adjustment of their doctrines with over all changes happening in their society. During the 5th and 4th century B.C.E Nagas clearly established themselves as formidable force capable enough to achieve political and non- political ends and effect reconciliation between warring regimes [30] . It was around this period that Sisunagas established the first historical dynasty of Magdha [31].

The Kada coins of 3rd – 2nd century B.C.E found from Sivalik Mountains are the evidence for the rise of Naga power and its spread. Kada is identified with Kadru, wife of Kasyapa and mother of serpents. The coins have on reverse and obverse undulating lines representing symbolically the snakes; (cf Allan, *Catalogue of Coins of Ancient India*[32] pp. XVII, XCII) coins have their legends engraved in pre Kushan Brahmi. Details are given as under (cf, Vettan M. Perabir *Encyclopaedia of Indian culture,* Delhi 1975, p363-64).

Metal and shape	Obverse	Reverse
Copper, round	A large sun with rays	Uncertain rectangular object on left.
Copper , round	Undulating bold line on the top.Symbolizing a Nag below Taurine symbol and legend in Brahmi.	Same as on obverse
Copper, round	A standing figure of a deity holding a staff in his left hand and pouch in the right.	Snake, swastika legend khanduga
Copper square	Completely filled with a figure of an elephant.	Snake on the top taurine symbol legend kha-de.sa
Copper ,round	A large sun	Horse/dear
Copper	Kartikkya	Staff in left hand water gourd

Migrations voluntary or under duress, and expulsions from the main Brahmanical lands in the north made the Nagas spread towards south and west of the Gangetic valley [33]. Nagas established themselves in Narmada region [34] (present Nagpur) which *Mahabharta* places with Avanti [35] forming in the 4th century B.C.E integral part of the Magdhan empire where one of the Naga dynasty also ruled. The kingdom was overthrown by the first dynasty of Mahismati, known to *Puranas* as Haihaya. In the post Kushan period Nagas rose to rule the lands which they earlier held as feudatories of the Kushans[36]. During 3rd and early 4th century Nagas had their suzerainty over Mathura [37] along with the adjacent region in the northern and central India including Kantipur and Padmavti [38]. The *Vakataka epigraphs* mention the Bharsiva Naga of Padmavati and their matrimonial relationship with the Vaktaka kings of Deccan. The legend on the coins from Padmavati (32 Km. away from Gawaliar) reads Maharaja Bharanaga.

Popularity of Naga-worship in Mathura is attested by:

a) The presence of images of Naga deities, who in their human form have snake Lords[40].

b) The Naga shrine at Sonkh which has on one of its lintels Naga and Nagis with snake scalp[41].

c) The elephant headed nude dwarf (Ganesh) wearing a snake for Yajnopavita.[42]

d) Statue of Balrama, in his incarnation of cosmic serpent Sesa; left hand holding a cup and right hand raised in *abhaya- mudra* [43]. Balrama under a snake canopy.

e) Nagraj panel Sonkh Mathura plX[44].

Donations from a community, propitiating fertility deity associated with Naga cult were accepted and appropriated by a late Kushana monastery at Mathura, [45]. When the Gupta suzerainty over Magdha was complete, they found Naga chiefdoms and kingdoms a major impediment in their expansion programme[46]. In order to legitimize their expeditions against Nagas and other small powers in North India, they took *Garuda*[47] (who preys on snakes) as their emblem and projected themselves as the protectors of religion[48], particularly Vishnavi brand of Hinduism, and saviours of the people from anti Vedic, savage usurpers of political power.[49] Though Naga brides continued to find their legitimate places in the imperial seraglio[50] and most of the cults of the communities outside the pale of Hinduism incorporated in the emerging socio-religious system[51], Gupta monarchs waged a two pronged war against their opponents in the northern and central India. While almost all Naga and non- Naga, political arrangements, chiefdoms or states were vanquished [52] in the actual war against them, the new Brahmanic literature created myths and doctrines to the advantage of Guptas and denigration of their opponents including Nagas. Most of the motifs, traditions and concepts which later became circulated among other cultures had their early beginning under Guptas[53]. Brahmans whether *Puranic* or *Vedic* received land grants for their services to the state especially in legitimizing its authority and use of force. Varna status became reserved for elites others simply became Jatis[55]. However Nagas seem to have remained in possession of lands around Garwal[56] where they maintained their kingdom during 4th /5th century CE. The popularity of the cult is attested by the Hillocks around Kanwor which have been named after various Nagas, being worshipped there. The Sheshnag, occupies a prominent place in the Kashmir Nag lore but the one situated in Seeni (Garwar region) is considered by the scholars to be the original one·

Nagas retained their cultural cum political centres away from the main Gupta occupations. Around Hardwar between Bhagirath (Ganges) and Alak Nanda Hills, Nag rajas established their rule as evidenced by the Haraha[58] inscription. On the two tridents, found now in the Barbat and Goveshvar temple [59]. The inscription mentions five Naga rajas in the chronological order. The Nags worshipped there are, Ganpati(Goveshvar temple) and Goha(Barbat temple), both are, as the names indicate associated with Siva [60].

During the Gupta period, the Puranic Brahman scholars helped reformulate or recast new legends and mythologies, providing not only suitable genealogies, even to the kings whose immediate ancestors, too, were unknown, but also the cults and deities to make their own position secure and economically comfortable because they and they only knew how to maintain the cult and please the deity[61]. The subjugation of Nagas was mythologized and metaphorically represented, for example, by providing a Naga bed and canopy to Vishnu for rest [62].

While going through all evidence about Naga lore of India (south India [63] has been purposefully left out of the discourse), which includes historical records augmented by inscriptions, representations in plastic, numismatics and other material finds, we find the domain of Nagas (till 6th century CE) confined to particular segments in the north west India, lower Indus region[64], Gandhara, Gangetic valley, central India and north east India. It is the region where they faced Aryans, lived in hostility or symbiotic relationship with them, exterminated or ex communicated at times, build political regimes, or kingdoms and entered into matrimonial relations with the desirous parties from other communities or groups. Nowhere in whole of this discussion Kashmir figures anywhere.

No *Purana, Mahatmaya* or any other Brahmanic writing, anterior to *Nilmatpurana,* has surfaced to bestow Kashmir with Naga presence or cult. Away from home no historian of remote, Pliny[65], Strabo [66] or Herodotus [67] who mention Kashmir [68] directly or indirectly in connection with an event, occurrence or a tribe associate it with any kind of Naga cult. The human settlements excavated, so far in Kashmir, more importantly Burzahama [69] and Guphkral[70], are bereft of any material which could be associated with Nagas. The human figures in a hunting scene [71] engraved on a stone slab from 1c level at Burzahama, corresponding to 1700——800 B.C also carry no Naga motifs. This is the period, roughly, contemporaneous with *Bhartawar* and expeditions against Nagas in Gangetic valley. The Burzhama lasts till 800_ 700 B.C which is the initial period for the Semthan settlement on the plateau near Bijbehara, Kashmir [72]. The site establishes its contacts with the Gangetic plains through the finds of two shards of NBP[73]. The rubble walls and mud floors and the artefacts discovered from the site nullify any association of people concerned with any Naga practices[74] Semthan, as the extension of Burzahama carries us through megalithic period, directly into historical period of Kashmir without offering any information whatsoever about the Nagas. The Numismatic finds from the place issued by Euthydioms(240_ 200 B.C) Euckratides [75], (170_ 155 B.C), Menandar (155_ 130 B.C), Antimachus (130_ 125 B.C), Appolodotus (115_ 95 B.c) and Hippostratos or Hermus (75 _55 B.C) indicate the Kashmir's connection with indo_ Greeks. We have a standing Greek deity on a clay seal from this period and site [76]. The terracotta figurines from late Semthan (1st _ 2nd century CE) include terracotta head of a soldier supporting a headgear and beard made by appliqué technique[77]. A terracotta figurine wearing a gown and a light pyjama[78] and necklace, a terracotta human figurine with a headgear and gown[79], bare handed miniature terracotta figurine[80] terracotta head of a deity. There again are no Naga resemblances present. Similar is the case with the human or animal figures on the Harwan tiles (2nd/3rd century CE). It cannot be the case that when Nagas of India were being depicted with all their motifs and essential characteristics, Kashmir Nagas, who according to the Nilmata were so prominent and culturally overwhelming, were deliberately ignored by the executioners of art and crafts. Human figures on the tiles do not represent any one class of people but depict musicians, dancing girls, love making couples, ascetics hunters and women cutting across the sections of the society. The site is generally associated with the Buddhists who had very friendly relations with the Nagas[81].

In the early years of 6th century CE Mehrkula[82], deprived of his possessions in North India descends on Kashmir, treacherously captures its throne, brutally kills the Buddhists and punishes Brahmans[83] for supporting and tolerating the Buddhists so long. Mehrkul established the Saivism brought Brahmans from Gandhara to popularise its teachings[84]. Thence after, for more than five-six generations, it is only Hinduism (read Saivism) which prevails in Kashmir till the advent of Meghavan. Archaeology is in close conformity with the historical records of the period. We have, besides the Siva motif coins of Mehrkul[85], the stone images of Hindu gods and goddesses in round but no Naga image not even as their attendants.

The various political arrangements emerging in the Gangetic plains had to accommodate the consequences of their relations with each other and with the forest dwellers and other so called aboriginals of the land, in their evolution to chiefdoms and statehood. The trading partners helped to create a communication system building new awareness about each other and/or surpassing or multiplying the apprehensions about each other. The religious and semi-religious literature produced during the period, reflects the changing modes and behavioural patterns of the societies concerned, in their own idiom, style and tradition. While old encounters were mythologized, the contemporary ones were seen from the perspective of the class addressed to or of the immediate concern. Myth making is a never ending process.

The space sharing, as a result of multiple relations, gave rise to new questions and new demands requiring new approaches. Political alliances, economic requirements and social obligations made it necessary to provide the legitimacy to the new order. Buddhism which was domineering but never a majority religion in the Indian context evolved to a stage where the entry of the cults and deities originally belonging to Brahmanism became natural.

The Brahmans who were finding themselves less fortunate to receive the kind of patronage available to Buddhists, tried many methods to claim back the prestige and economic power and penetrate into the Sangha, without loosing the identity. They declared Buddha as a 16th incarnation of Vishnu. But their basic ambitions remained unsatisfied. In order to ward off the "evil of Buddhism" they needed such alliances and political arrangements which would be favourable to them.

The utility and matrimonial relations had made the Nagas a positive help and less offending. Their cults and customs had become well recognised and acceptable. The offspring of matrimonial relations existing between Nagas (generally female Nages) and Hindus were recognised as legitimate and provided *au contrarie* to the old injunctions against such marriages, an appropriate Varna status. The kings and communities with obscure past, too, were provided respectable genealogies. While Vedic Brahmans were, strictly, concerned with the maintenance of Vedic rites and sacrifices, the neo Brahmanism which gained popularity in the post Kushan period began to imbibe and give currency to the cults and practice of non Hindu communities and aboriginals.

This process of selective aculturalization had significant politico-economic implications for the state and the Brahmans both. While State gained more sustainability and space to arrange things in its own way Brahmans obtained a large clientele away from the reach of Vedic Brahmans (and Buddhists) and a chance to manoeuvre things in their own way. So Buddhism and Brahmanism both were adjusting to each other a process which later culminated in the emergence of tantricism (Vajrayana).

Situation in Kashmir became more conducive to the exploits of the Brahmans after the eclipse of Kushans. Buddhism was still the dominant and respectable religion though it had lost the exclusive right to royal patronage. A paradigm shift, now, to Hinduism (Brahmanism) is symbolically represented by the modifications effected on the Buddhist statue of Baramula (5th century AD) in order to present it as a Siva image in round. Under the modifications, which are naive Buddha is still discernable. In the last decades of 5th century (488 AD) Huns put Ghandhara to devastation and it lost for good the status of being the excellent centre of art and sciences. Soon afterwards Mehrkul (530 AD) gave a good jolt to Buddhism in Kashmir and established Saivism. But it seems that Buddhism still retained much of its prestige though now it had to share space with Saivism and Vishnuism as is evidenced by the archaeological finds from Bijbehara, Pandrethan and Baramula and as could be gleaned from the opening statements in the opening pages of Nilmatpurana which open with the invocation to Vishnu.

Nilmatpurana introduces systematically the Naglore and tries to authenticate and popularize it. The narrative in its essentials is carried forward by Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini* with the addition of couple of Nag tales for embellishment and effect.

Nilmatpurana, however is not a mutation or creation *ex-nihilo.* In its essentials, it dwells upon the Naglore of India and the concepts involved there in. The two main concepts, providing foundation to the narrative concerned are: the Nagas being the forest dwellers and aboriginals of India and that Nagas were expelled by the Vedic people and they spread towards North West from the places mentioned in the epics. *Jatakas Mahabhartha and Puranas* are the original sources of Naga narratives. The brahmanic lore of India incorporates much of this material as per its requirements and once brahmans settle down in Kashmir they provide the Nag tales with geographical locales in Kashmir. Pertinent to mention, the folktales travel faster, create their niches and subsequently fresh identities and become naturalised in the land of their immigration, as well. General tales about Nagas could have reached Kashmir earlier through the immigrants particularly from the lands of Nag influences and traditions, including the Brahmans invited and resettled in the parts of Kashmir by the Hindu rulers.

Channels of transmission were many: the immigrants including the Brahmans invited and resettled in the parts of Kashmir by the rulers concerned; The invasions and annexation of Kashmir by the people connected somehow with the Nagas of North India; trade and political arrangements between Kashmir and North India making ingress and egress of the people more frequent. The Kashmir rulers provided patronage [86] to the immigrant brahmans for various reasons.

Kashmir is not and never was an exclusive land of (for) Brahmans. There always were other communities. The Brahmans were mainly involved with ritualistic cycles at the various levels of the society which included "*The other*" for whom the rituals had to be performed. They were (are) by their own claim and tradition, the immigrants from India (possibly from

Gangetic plain) and identified themselves, along with other self proclaimed "Twice born" of (North) India with the Puranic Brahmans, if not with the Vedic Brahmans (also). This claim to purity of race and faith, made them distinct from "*the other*" whom they encountered in Kashmir. Furthermore they considered themselves, as per the myths and legends circulated, the progeny of the first human arrivals to settle in Kashmir. The myth of creation, again the contribution of Brahmans of the old, provides them an envious position among other creatures (humans included).

As Vedas project the Aryans as the carriers of civilization and saviours of communities living a subhuman life *Nilmatpurana*, too, projects the Brahmans as the most beneficial, enlightened community through whom Nila Naga tried to accomplish his project[87].

By the time *Nilamtpurana* was composed, the Nagas were again on ascendancy. Almost all their cults and festivals had received, by then, recognition and necessary sanction and sanctity. Brahmanism had already created an honorific space for Nagas and Nag lore. The Vishnu and Siva both received their Nagas and Brahmans presided over the rituals and sacrifices performed by the Nagas in India. There are evidences where Nag shrines were associated with Siva and Vishnu. In the creation myths of Hindus Naga occupied a significant place.

Nilmatpurana which follows the *Tradition of Mahabharata* (late redaction) where Naga narratives are given a prominent space has / had two important objectives: one to establish the prestige and glory of the Brahmans and next to create an environment for the destruction of demons substituted by Bhikshus (plague of Bhikshus)[88]. The frame story provided to the treatise (Nmp) has the same scheme of things and characters as known from *Mahabharata*. The story opens in the manner of the *Mahakavya* with the introduction of Janamjeya seeking clarification of his doubts[89] from Vaisampayane, the sage and the pupil of Vedavyasa (*Nilmat Vitastamahatmaya*). The creation story of Kashmir is again introduced with a story from *Mahabharata*. Kadru, the mother of Nagas (Thousand in number) and Vinata, the mother of Garudas challenge each other with a bet which subsequently sets snakes and Garudas against each other on a life long war path. Vasuki[90], the king of Nagas of Patala, who's life in the accounts of *Mahabharata*, is spared by Janamjeya invokes Vishnu for a safe shelter from Garudas, Vishnu settles them in Satisaras and appoints

Nila another son of Kasyapa as their king. In *Mahabharata* it is Astik[91], the Brahman who saves the lives of Nagas from the total annihilation and in the *Nilmatpurana* it is Candradeva, the Brahman, who is entrusted with the task of getting the Naga rites, enshrined in the *Nilmatpurana* promulgated. Most of the rites mentioned are simple repetition of those found in the Puranas and practiced in India.

Nilmatpurana is an attempt to retain the divine character of the observances most of which were already in vogue, and recommended by Brahmanic literature of India. The prestige and popularity which Buddhists of Kashmir enjoyed till late [92] would have, been an impediment in the way of popular acceptance of Brahmanisim. Despite the near massacre of Buddhists by the Saivite ruler Mehrkul in the 6th century the "plague of Bhikshus"[93] would with ease not only infringe upon the space desired by the Brahmans but also question the authenticity and validity of their rites. Through Nila Nag the observances and rites to be promulgated, received a divine sanction and negated any doubts about their being a human manipulation[94].

Brahmans, in their interests, assigned springs and other water bodies to the serpent gods. Sheshnag, Anantnag, Vasukh Nag, Takshakh Nag were offered additional dwelling places in Kashmir over and above their original abodes in India.

Encouraged by the Naga mythology of *Nilmatpurana* scholars of Kashmir studies have offered, in favour of Naga presence in Kashmir, some unique evidences, which include items of late antiquity, or found distributed in space and time and shared by people in the various regions of India. The hair style[95], tresses dressed in a tuft falling behind in one or two locks, headdress with a tail like extension from behind, rising end of a turban depicting hood of a snake, bangles with serpent shaped ends and Nag Paschami.

However for all the items no representation from old is available. The various styles visible on the figures, figurines, statues from Burzahama, Semthan, Bijbehara (vejeshvara) Baramula etc. do not in any way correspond to styles mentioned as Naga evidence. The paintings from different periods and regions would surely give a lie to the contentions of our scholars. Furthermore mention of Nag head bangles could be found in the novel *God of Small Things* (Arundhati Roy) as well which no way belongs to Kashmir. These items are cultural variables, changing not only with the taste of their users but also with the taste of their fabricating agents. And more importantly their designs are informed by the factors from outside.

Nag Panchami, the 5th of the Nagas (serpents) [96] is connected with the killing of serpent Kalliya and the triumphant return of his slayer Krsna from battle place, on the banks of Yamuna. It is a kind of honorific farewell to deceased. However Nag Panchami achieved added importance once the Nag cults got introduced to Brahmanism[97]. Among the famous Nag worshipping centres of India were Mathura[98], where Dandikarn, lord of snakes was worshipped and Maniyar Matha (Bihar) where four Naga deities, Arbuda, Sakara,Vapi, Svastika and Maninag were worshipped. Nag Panchami is held on 5th of Margasirssa sukla or 5th of Sravana[99].

Kashmir Scholars often present the story of *Hemal* and *Nagrai* as an evidence for the presence of Nagas in Kashmir. *Hemal Nagrai* belongs to the genre of folktales[100] It is very difficult to fix the origin of a folktale. Same tale with variables could be attested for many places, distances apart .Many Rajput tribes in central India claim their origin to or their right on the same kind of a tale where a Nag prince falls in love with a girl of their tribe.

Following narrative is considered to be the original version of *Hemal Nagrai.* The Maharajas of Chota Nagpur call themselves Nag Bansi rajputs. They identify themselves as the progeny of Naga king and a Brahman girl. Their creation story is:

King of Nagas takes a human form- marries a beautiful Brahman girl of Banaras. Naga's new incarnation is incomplete .He has to keep his forked tongue in cheeks and his evil smelling breath away. Being bound by the same conditions as his Teutonic prototype could only disclose his sign at the cost of separation from his wife___ women gets suspicious. She asks questions (repeatedly) but is unable to get the truth. Nag arranges a pilgrimage to the shrine at Jaggannath Puri Orissa. Women is down with labour. She enquires again of his whereabouts. Folklore tradition etiquette spells out the beans. Nag turns into Cobra. Woman dies giving birth to his two sons[101].

Thus the originality of the tale stands disputed[102].

The story does not prove anything beyond itself[103]. The geographical locales and quasi historical setting given to the story are literary devices for the effect and reach.

Naglore has come to stay in Kashmir[104]. It is a fine piece of literature but we need not to make it our basis to understand the pre or historic Kashmir. No Naga aboriginals for Kashmir are attested.

Readings:

1. The foundation of Indianized Kingdom of Funan elucidates the change of variables in a folktale. One Kaundinya guided by his dream, sets out in search of a kingdom which he wins by Kidnapping and marrying Willow Leaf, The queen of Funan. Later the tale is retold in Indian terms- A Brahman Kaundinya marries Nagi Soma, the daughter of the King of Nagas and wins the throne of Funan. The same story is now claimed by Khmers (Cambodia) and south Indian Pallavas as the origin of their Kingdom (s) C.F. Basham, A.L. *A cultural History of India* Oxford University press (1975) 2003 p.446.
2. Harut and Marut belong to the Semitic tradition with their ultimate place in Babylon (dungeon of Babylon). Kashmir too has a dungeon of Babylon (cahi Babul) on the Martand Plateau (Kiherbal) where Harut and Marut are hanging upside down.
3. Mazari Sharief in the North of Afghanistan, on the left bank of Oxus, is a centre of Pilgrimage for those who traditionally believe it as the resting place of martyred 4th caliph of Muslims, Hazrat Ali. There is another Shrine Mazar Shah Ali in Uzbekistan, associated with Hazrat Ali.
4. Jesus, the prophet, whose life death and resurrection as reported by the evangelists are the basis of the Christian massage of salvation, is venerated by the Muslims also as one in the chain of their prophets. In Kashmir semi historical narratives (not older than 19th century), Jesus has his grave in Kashmir (Khanyar) and scholars are earnestly weaving the narratives to prove it genuine.

Tail piece:

The Selene (moon goddess) is still spinning and waiting for her
Cinderella (Sain Kisir) to knock at her door

References and Footnote

1. The sub title of my paper. *The past never is* could be better understood with reference to art and literature where past is constructed to make the present of a character meaningful. The meaning visits the items, salvaged from without. Salman Rushdie reworks the Arab traditional

opening of a story – *Kan wa ma kan, fi qadim azzaman* thus - It was and it was not so, as the old stories used to say, it happened and it never did (*Satanic Verses,* Dover D.E: Consortium, Inc, 1988, p35).

2. The opening of the *Nilmatpurana* belongs to the tradition of the folktales and scriptures where the authorship is never claimed by the original composer but bestowed upon a 3rd person- grand mother / sage/ or a divinity in order to provide authenticity to the thing said.
3. *Nilmatpurana,* edited with introduction and notes in English by Ram Lal Kanjilal and Jaggadhar Zadoo Sastri, Lahore: Motilal Banarasidas, 1924; edited with English translation by (Prof) Ved Kumari Gai, Vol, 1st ed, JK academy of Art culture and languages, Srinagar 1973.
4. .*Rajtarangini,* Kalhana, Sanskrit original, Translated into English and edited, with an introduction, commentary and Appendices by M.A Stein, in two volumes under the title *Kalhana's Rajatarangini _ A chronicle of Kings of Kashmir,* (1902) reprint 1979, Motilal Banarsidas, New Delhi.
5. Given the extension of the Mauryan Empire, Kashmir, too, may have come under their suzerainty, though a few Kashmir scholars have raised doubts about it, but the finds of punch mark coins, which do not necessary mean the annexation of Kashmir by Asoka, do indicate the Mauryan occupation of Kashmir. Mehrkul, (6th century) resettled the Brahmans of Gandhara in Kashmir, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini,* Vol. I, 100, 108, 307.
6. D. D. Kosumbi, *The culture and civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline,* Rep. 1994, Vikas publishing house, New Delhi p92; *Nilmatpurana,* 1.72; *Rajatarangini,* Ibid 1,26; 45.
7. The latter editions of *Mahabharata* (200 BCE - 200 CE) deal also with items in variance with and different from the Vedic rituals and religion D. D. Kosumbi, *The culture and civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline,* Rep. 1994, Vikas New Delhi p93.
8. D. D. Kosumbi, *The culture and civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline,* Rep. 1994, Vikas New Delhi p93; A Banerji Sastri, (*Asura India* p96-98) identifies Nagas as Asura and writes, "Dasas were the earliest settlers, next the Asuras, and the latest Aryas" (p34).
9. *Rigveda* speaks about a savage tribe who used to visit Aryan settlements to sell some herbs (plant). A. C. Dass *Rigvedic India* Vol. 17 (1), Cosmo publications, 1920, series 1987 p149.
10. Aruuda, a Rsi of Serpa tribe presided over the sacrifice held by the Brahmans *Aittareya Brahman* VI 26.1 cf A. C Dass, *Rigvedic India* Vol. 17(1), Cosmo publications (1970) 1987 p.148.
11. A Rsi named Jaratkaru married the sister of Vassuki, the king of Serpas. *Aittareya Brahman* VI 26.1 cf A. C Dass, *Rigvedic India* Vol. 17(1), Cosmo publications (1970) 1987 p.148. Once Nagas reasserted themselves.

Dhatarattha, the Naga king married the Benares princess Samuddaja, *Jataka*; IV p.454-5 cf *Glimpses of Political History* p.65.

12. Now, the progeny of a Brahman and a Naga mother could still retain their Brahman clan and function. Astika, who could successfully achieve the truce between Nagas and Janamjeya, was the son of a Brahmin and his Naga wife and so was the chief priest of the king Somsarvas. D. D. Kosumbi, *The culture and civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline,* Rep. 1994, Vikas New Delhi p.93.
13. In the later narratives Indra is regularly shown on the side of Asuras.
14. D. D. Kosumbi, *The culture and civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline*, Rep. 1994, Vikas New Delhi p.92.
15. Later redactions appreciatively remember Nagas (Nagi). In *Vanaparva* Chapter265 verses 2-3, "Art thou a devi, a yakshi a demoness a charming Apsara, or a fair Daitya damsel or the princess incarnate of a Nag King or Vanachari or female friend or a spouse of a king Varuna, Yama, Soma or of Kubera.
16. Brahmanism manipulated the epic to its own glory P.E, Pargitor, The Nations of India at the battle between the Pandavas and Kauravas *J.A.R.S*, 1908, p.603.
17. D. D. Kosumbi, *The culture and civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline*, Rep. 1994, Vikas New Delhi p.93.
18. Some of the scriptures extol Nagas and some are still hostile.
19. D. D. Kosumbi, *The culture and civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline*, Rep. 1994, Vikas New Delhi p.93.
20. A. C. Dass, *Rigvedic India* Vol. 17(1), Cosmo publications (1970) 1987 p.148.
21. *Harivamsa, Vanaparva,* 33.6; Mahabharta II, 14.32-34.
22. Dowson, *Classical Dictionary- A Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion*, Rep. New Delhi1987 p.213; Naga centers of influence at Vidisa and Padmavati. Smith, Early *History of India;* P.300.
23. "The Kambojas, Yavanas, Cakas, Madras, Kaikeyas, Sundhus and Sauviras ((N.west) Bhojas (west), Dakshinapath and mhismati and Avanti have all been denounced by the Brahmans and Bards of Mahabharata and associated with the uncouth, non vedic people and Nagas". P.E, Pargitor, The Nations of India at the Battle between the Pandavas and Kauravas in *J.A.R.S,* 1908, p.334.
24. P.E, Pargitor, The Nations of India at the Battle between the Pandavas and Kauravas J.A.R.S, 1908, p.334.
25. R.N. Saletore, *Encyclopaedia of Indian culture* sterling, New Delhi 1983 p.1008. Roy Chaudhury *Political History of India* (1996 India) 8th imp 2008 p.414, 443, 720.

26. The latter editions (200 BC-200 AD) deal also with items in variance with the Vedic ritual and religion. D. D. Kosumbi, *The culture and civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline*, Rep. 1994, Vikas New Delhi p.93.
27. Surendra Nath Dasgupta , *A History of Indian Philosophy* Vol.I. Motilal Banarsidas, New Delhi; 1988 p.84.
28. *Puranas* and *Jatakas* remember Nagas as minor deities and consider them superior to men for their special attributes. Buddhists present them as the protectors of sacred law (Dharma) R.N. Saletore, *Encyclopaedia of Indian culture* sterling, New Delhi 1983 p.1007.
29. Buddha himself claimed to have been a Naga in his previous birth R.N. Saletore, *Encyclopaedia of Indian culture* sterling, New Delhi 1983 p.1007.
30. Nag King Campeyya helped the king of Magadha to achieve sovereignty over both the kingdoms of Magadha and Anga; *Jataka*; IV p.454 cf Glimpses *of political History* p.64.
31. Jayaswal, J.B.O.R.S. vol. I, p.67; JASB. 1913.
32. CF Allan, Catalogue of Coins; Benerji R.D. *The Age of Imperial Guptas*, p.13.
33. R.N. Saletore, *Encyclopaedia of Indian culture* sterling, New Delhi 1983 p.1008. Debreuil, *Ancient History of the Deccan* gives us the names of two Nagas (Raja) Sisu Nandi and the Prince Sivanandi p.31
34. R.N. Saletore, *Encyclopaedia of Indian culture* sterling, New Delhi 1983 p.1008.
35. Dowson, *Classical Dictionary- A Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion*, Rep. New Delhi1987 p.213;
36. Nagas were very powerful after Kushanas and prior to the rise of Guptas (Samudra Gupta). Even under Kushanas they are known to have possessed large tracts of land independently.
37. R.N. Saletore, *Encyclopaedia of Indian culture* sterling, New Delhi 1983 p.1020.
38. R.N. Saletore, *Encyclopaedia of Indian culture* sterling, New Delhi 1983 p.1020.
39. Mehesvara Naga whose Father was Nagbhat. Fleet, CII, III, p.241, 283. Aletkar, *Journal of Numismatic Society of India* v, p.III.. Basham, A.L. *A cultural History of India* Oxford University press (1975) 2003 p.53.
40. It has also Naga and Garuda dual. Mathura Museum Acc No. 41.2915.
41. Mathura Museum Acc No. 15.758.
42. Mathura Museum Acc No. 15.758.
43. Lucknow Museum G. 215. Balram bother of Krsna both are given cobra canopy.

44. S.P Gupta (ed.) *Kushana Sculpture from* Sanghol National Museum 2003 p22.
45. Romila Thapar, *Penguin History of Early India*, Penguin books New Delhi 2002 p.271.
46. The first Gupta king Deva Raja, Deva Sri or Deva Gupta is mentioned by Vakataka inscription of 412-13 C.E. Roy Chaudhury *Political History of India* (1996 India) 8th imp 2008 p.490, 491, 492, 768.
47. Guruda Symbol had a political motive; Roy Chaudhury, *Political History of India* p.536; Rajim copper plate grant of Raja Tivara Deva; R.N. Saletore, *Encyclopedia of Indian culture* Sterling, New Delhi 1983 p.1010.
48. In Bhitari inscripation and coin legends Skanda Gupta is called Amalatma (pure soul), Parahitakari (benefactor of others) Allan, *Gupta Coins* (XXI); Roy Chaudhury *Political History of India* p.512.
49. Debreuil, *Ancient History of the Deccan* p.31; Junagadah inscription of Skanda Gupta, *Narapati Bhujaganam manadarpot phananam*
   Pratikrti Gurudajnam nirvishim chakrvarta;
   Roy Chaudhury *Political History of India* p.414, 73, 74.
50. Roy Chaudhury *Political History of India* p.426, 489.
51. The kind of Brahmanism which was evolving for more than a century took a pronounced shape during the reign of imperial Guptas. Though Vedic Brahmanism as always retained its prestige but its base was already shrinking because of the emersion of cults and practices generally associated with non Vedic societies, in the social fabric of the period. Their incorporation was encouraged by the class of Brahmans, who had either a mixed parentage or envious of the Vedic Brahmans mostly for socio-economic reasons. Worship of female deities associated with fertility cults culminated into Shakti cults and Tantricism, (and rise of Yogini cults). Image or idol became the focus of Puja. This kind of Brahmanism is known as Puranic Brahmanism. Vidya deheja, *Yogni Cult and Temples,* National Museum , ND, pp.67,56,11,13, 59,64 passim.
52. Debreuil, *Ancient History of the Deccan* p.31; Roy Chaudhury, *Political History of India* (1996 India) 8th imp 2008 p.473
53. Romila Thapar, *Penguin History of Early India*, Penguin books New Delhi 2002 p.271.
54. Romila Thapar, *Penguin History of Early India*, Penguin books New Delhi 2002 p.323.
55. Romila Thapar, *Penguin History of Early India*, Penguin books New Delhi 2002 p.293.
56. Many more Naga Kingdoms arose during and after the Guptas. Gurrjara – Pratihara Dynasty: Pallava Kingdom with its close relations with Nagas *Indian Antiquary* 1984, p.85; fleet CII, III p.283.

57. The emigrants carry their reminiscences and whenever they get an opportunity they try to translate their memories into material representation and thus keep their connection with the "lost opportunity" alive. It is also a fact that folk items, over a period receive a geography and history and thus enter into the people's lives as legends and facts.
58. Of late 4th / 5th century CE. Haraha inscription of 554/55 indicates the end of Gupta rule with the triumph of Isanavarman.
59. The two temples are evidence of Naga supremacy and their close connection with Siva in the Bharu incarnation. They belong to early 5th century C.E.
60. Guha is the son of Ganesh; Romila Thapar, *Penguin History of Early India*, Penguin books New Delhi 2002 p.325.
61. Romila Thapar, *Penguin History of Early India*, Penguin books New Delhi 2002 p.319-25.
62. Even in their surrender, Nagas achieve grace though their nearness to the Maheshvara and Siva. The lord of the serpents Ananta of the thousand hoods serves as the bed and canopy to Vishnu and Vasukhi the King of serpents attends Siva as his necklace (or a garland).
63. Nagas of Southern India considered indigenous to the land. Kaviripattnam is associated with a metropolis of Nagas Vogel, *India Serpent Lore,* 1927, p.36; Srinavasan Ayer, *Tamil Studies* vol. I, 1914, p.8
64. Jhon Marshall, *Mohenjo Daro 1*, p.67-68
65. Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, 61/62- d.ca 113.
66 .Strabo, 64/63 BC – CE. 23.
67. Herodotus ca 484 – 430 or 420.
68. In their a). H. Rackham, *Pliny Natural History* London, 1947. b). H. L. Jones. *The Geography of Strabo* London, 1951. c). Aubreay de Selincourt (Tr.) *Herodotus, The* Histories, Penguin Books, 1954.
69. B. K Thapar, Fresh Light on the Neolithic Cultures of India in *Journal of Central Asia* (Pakistan), Vol. VII No: 1 July 1984, pp.192-195.
70. B. B. Lal, *Earliest Civilization of South Asia,* Aryan Books, New Delhi, 1997 p.15,17.
71. B. B. Lal, *Earliest Civilization of South Asia,* Aryan Books, New Delhi, 1997 p.15,17.
72. Semthan continues the tradition set by Burzahama and Gufkral; indications of pise and pebble walls and wheel turned red ware of fine paste, with slip treatment and the kind of pottery establishes their community life. Pande, B. M, the Neolithic in Kashmir in *Anthropologist,*Vol xvii, No 1-2, 1970 cf R. C Agarwal, *Kashmir and its Monumental Glory,* Aryan Books, New Delhi, 1998.
73. Deshpande, M.N (Ed) *Indian Archaeology review,* 1977/78 p72, 73, 74.

NBP ware links with the finds from Gangetic plains.

74. Mud clods seem to have been used. R. C Agarwal, *Kashmir and its Monumental Glory*, opcit. Silver coins and more importantly punch marked coins relate the period with Mauryas.
75. The coins of Euthedemos who claimed sovereignty around 240 B.c p 76 are attested for Kashmir and belong probably to 190 B.C.
76. The Indo-Greek coins, terracotta heads with pronounced Greek influence and a clay seal depicting a standing Greek deity, besides other artefacts, establish Kashmir's connection with the neighbouring Greek colonies as early as 190 B.C. Tarn, W.W, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge University press, 1951, Cuningham A, *Coins of Indo Scythians, Sakas and Kushanas*, Delhi, part III, 1971, p 666.
77. The impacts of Greek art and craft are obvious in this broken terracotta piece. Face is round and provided with a moustache.
78. The figure has ornament anklets; roundish earlobes. The Pyjama (tunic) becomes tighter towards feet.
79. It looks like a royal personage, R. C Agarwal, *Kashmir and its Monumental Glory,* Aryan Books, New Delhi, 1998 p.88.
80. It is a smiling figure, besides there is very important headless terracotta statue of a lady laden with heavy clothes. It has clear Kushan imprints and terracotta plaque depicting Buddha with a long conical headgear.
81. R.C. Agarwal Opcit.
82. By the later half of the 5th century
83. Brahmans from Gandhara, resembling himself in his habits and verily themselves the lowest of the twice born accepted agraharas from him *Rajtarangini* Vol.I Book1 sh. 307.
84. He re-established pious observances in this land which overran by impure Daradas, Bhauttas and Mlecchas, has fallen off from The sacred Law ...... he bestowed a thousand agraharas on Brahmans from the Gandhara _ at Vijayesvara *Rajtarangini* Vol.I Book1 sh. 312 - 316
85. Mihr Kula has been erroneously placed much before his actual date in the History. He comes to the throne of Kashmir by 530 and rules ruthlessly for 25 years. From the end of his rule to the coming of Lalitaditya in around 725 there were the rulers who generally followed non Buddhist tradition or a Siva cult. There of course were rules like Meghavan who helped build Viharas and Stupas. Historically Buddhists and Saivites / Vishnuvites are known to have been living in comparative peace in Kashmir. However by the time Avantivarman came to the throne Kashmir had established its Savite credentials.
86. Gopaditya bestowed agraharas on Brahmans born in Aryadesh, *Rajatarangini* vol. I Bk.1, 341. He removed those who ate garlic to

Bhuksiravatika and transferred the Brahmans, who had broken their rules of conduct to Khasata. Other Brahmans, again of holy life, who he had brought from pure countries, he settled in Vascika and other agraharas *Rajatarangini* vol. I Bk.1, 342, 343.

87. Candradeva, a Brahmin is bestowed with the Nilmatapurana by the King Nila himself *Nilmatpurana; Rajt* V, 601; VII 171; Kalhan's *Rajtarangini* ed. Stein vol. I Bk 1, 183, Vol.I BK IV, 601.
88. Kalhan's *Rajatarangini* vol. I, 183, 184.
89. *Nilmatapurana* VV.1-5.
90. Serves Siva as his garland
91. Son of a Naga mother and a Brahman father. D. D. Kosumbi, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical outline*, Rep. 1994, Vikas New Delhi p.93.
92. Kshemendra, *Dashavatarcarita.*
93. Kalhan's *Rajtarangini* vol. I, 184.
94. *Nilmatapurana*, 1,
95. The hair styles, locks and matted patterns which emerge from the old have nothing to authenticate the contentions of our modern scholars. Burzahoama stone slab (1700 BC) or the tiles from Harwan 1/2nd CE have figures with shoulder cut or shortcut hair.
96. *Encyclopedia of Indian culture,* Opcit, p.1016
97. Marshal, *Rajagrha and its Remains, in ASI AR* 1905-6, p.103.
98. T.V Mahalingam, The Nagas in Indian history and culture in JIH, Vol. XL III, 1965 p.1ff .41ff; Agarwal, *A Catalogue of the Brahmanical image in Mathura Art*, pp 101, 102, 104-105; Vogel, Naga worship in Ancient Mathura in *Archaeological Survey of India – Archeological report*, 1908/9 p.159ff.
99. B. N. Sharma, *Festivals of India*, New Delhi, 1978, p.24, 24.
100. There are many locations and springs in Kashmir associated, through common belief, with the Nagas. While in the outskirts of Shopian, on the right bank of Rainmbyar river, is situated a small spring generally associated with Nagrai, there is a comparatively large and deep spring in Islamabad called Hamal Nag.
101. E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal,* 1872,p165;Sir Herbert Risley, *The Peoples of India , W Thacker and Spikes Co.11nd ed, edited* by W Crooks, 1915, London,p73.
102. The Rajput clans of central India believe in and celebrate many Nag tales as the source of their community history, cf Vogel, *Serpent lore*
103. Colonizers, new settlers and invaders have multiple number of devices at hand to legitimize their arrival, settlement or rule: establishment or renaming of a settlement, contribution to or participation in the myths

and legends of conquered lands or by substituting the variables or through the application of their own understanding based on their previous education and training.

104. Kashmir folklore is a rich piece of literature and it has become richer with the addition of Nag-stories who have their origins in the *Jatakas, Puranas* and Rajtarangini of Kalhana.

Mughal Perception Of Kashmir (1586-1707)

Jigar Muhammad

Mughal emperor Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar initiated the policy of defining the boundary of the Mughal India. He declared that India was a country spread from Kabul to the Sea or south India. He planned to introduce Mughal rule in whole India. He devised two methods for the introduction of the Mughal rule in the different areas from Kabul to the south India: 1. the policy of annexation and 2. creating tributary states. The concept of Akbar's empire is well defined by Abul Fazl, when the latter defines the boundary of India. According to Abul Fazl, "Hindustan is described as enclosed on the east, west and south by the ocean, but Ceylon, Achin, the Moluccas, Malacca and a considerable number of islands are accounted within its extent. To the north is a lofty range of mountains, part of which stretches along the uttermost limits of Hindustan, and its other extremity passes into Turkestan and Persia. An immediate region lies between this and the vast frontiers of China, inhabited by various races, such as Kashmir, great and Little Tibet, Kishtawar and others. This quarter may therefore be likened to another ocean. With all its magnitude of extent and the mightiness of its empire it is unequalled in its climate, its succession of harvests and the equable temperament of its people."[1] Abul Fazl's mention clearly shows that for Akbar Kashmir was to be part of the Mughal Empire. Consequently, when Akbar started the empire building process in India he decided to bring Kashmir under the Muhgals. After its conquest Akbar annexed Kashmir to the Mughal Empire in 1586. Since it was the policy of Akbar to recognize and maintain regional identities of his empire, he treated Kashmir as a distinct region and worked for the preservation and propagation of both the tangible and intangible heritage of Kashmir. More importantly, he initiated the process of the cultural developments in Kashmir in accordance with its regional environment. Akbar's Kashmir policy was followed by all his successors.

The Mughals accepted that Kashmiris were followers of multiple cultural trends and pluralism was the dominant trend of their socio-economic life. For Abul Fazl, Kashmir was a land of the Brahmanism, Budhism and Islam. When Abul Fazl talks about Islam in Kashmir, he mentions both the Sunis and Shias as widely spread sects.[2] Similarly, Sufism was treated as a popular cultural trend of Kashmir by the Mughals. From Mirza Haidar Dughlat onwards the pluralism of Kashmir received considerable space in the Mughal chronicles. The Mirza was very much attracted by the temple architecture of Kashmir. One of his descriptions of existing temples clearly shows how religious toleration retained the ancient art and crafts as source inspiration for the people of Kashmir. Describing the architectural styles of the temples of Kashmir Mirza Haidar writes: "First and foremost among the wonders of Kashmir stand her idol temples. In and around Kashmir, there are more than one hundred and fifty temples which are built of blocks of hewn stone, fitted so accurately one upon the other, that there is absolutely no cement used. These stones have been so carefully placed in position, without plaster or mortar that a sheet of paper could not be passed between the joints. The blocks are from three to twenty *gaz* in length, one *gaz* in depth, and one to five *gaz* in breadth. The marvel is how these stones were transported and erected. The temples are nearly all built on the same plan. There is a square enclosure which in some places reaches the height of thirty *gaz,* while each side is about three hundred *gaz* long. Inside this enclosure there are pillars, and on the top of the pillars there are square capitals; on the top of these again, are placed supports, and most of these separate parts are made out of one block of stone. On the pillars are fixed the supports of the arches, and each arch is three or four *gaz* in height, having supports and capitals of one block of stone. On the top of this are placed four pillars of one or two pieces of stone. The inside and the outside of the halls have the appearance of two porticos, and these are covered with one or two stones. The capitals, the ornamentation in relief, the cornices, the "dog tooth" work, the inside covering and the outside, are all crowded with pictures and paintings, which I am incapable of describing. Some represent laughing and weeping figures, which astound the beholder. In the middle is a lofty throne of hewn stone, which I cannot describe. In the rest of the world there is not to be seen, or heard of, one building like this. How wonderful that there should [here] be a hundred and fifty of them!"[3] The historical records of Mughal period from Akbar onwards used to treat the temples of Kashmir as one of the major cultural symbols of Kashmir. Abul Fazl regards Kashmir as a land of Hindu gods and goddesses. According to him, "The whole country is regarded as holy ground by the Hindu sages. Forty five shrines are dedicated to Mahadev, sixty four to Vishnu, three to Brahma and twenty to Durga."[4] Both the Martand Temple and Amarnath are mentioned by the most of the Mughal chronicles. Abul Fazl mentioned Martand as a huge temple and Amarnath as a sacred place of Kashmir. Regarding Amarnath he writes "It (Amarnath) is considered a shrine of great sanctity. When a new moon rises from her throne of rays, a bubble as it were of ice is formed in the cave which daily increases little by little for fifteen days till it is somewhat higher than two yards, of the measure of the yard determined by His Majesty; with the waning moon, the image likewise begins to decrease, till no trace of it remains when the moon disappears. They believe it to be the image of Mahadev and regard it as a means (through supplication) of the fulfillment of their desires."[5] The sanctity and popularity of the Durga temple of Banihal are very much appreciated by Abul Fazl.[6] The importance of Nag cult is well recognized by the Mughals. Abul Fazl treats Nag worship as popular religious trend of Kashmir. He writes "In seven hundred places (of Kashmir) there are graven images of snakes which they worship and regarding which wonderful legends are told."[7] The Mughal emperor Jahangir (1605-27) was very much impressed from Virnag and he visited it number of times. He found a large snake at Virnag. He built a garden and several houses at Virnag and developed it as a heritage place.[8]

The Mughals' respect and regard to the religious sanctity and popularity of the Vishnu, Saiva and Durga and Nag temples show that the Vaishnavism, Saivism, Shaktism and Nag cult were treated as some of the dominant religious identities of Kashmir.

Like temples of Kashmir, the Brahmans of Kashmir were also treated as one of the main components of Kashmiri society, who worked for cultural development and acted as prime mover of Kashmiri society. For Abul Fazl, the Brahaman were the most respectable and true worshippers of god.[9] The Mughal emperor Jahangir viewed the Kashmiri Brahmans as one of the ancient settlers of the state and carrying their religious practices with all enthusiasm and sincerity. Narrating the Brahmans as a dominant identity of Kashmir Jahangir writes, "There is also a body of Brahmans living from old in this country (Kashmir), who still remain there and talk in the Kashmiri tongue. Outwardly one cannot distinguish them from Mussulmans. They have, however, books in Sanskrit language and read them. They carry into practice whatever relates to the worship of idols."[10] The Brahmans enjoyed their traditional rights under the Mughals in term of religious and literary activities. Since the Mughal emperor Akbar followed the policy of the *Sulh-i-Kul* (peace with all), the Brahmans continued to flourish in Kashmir. It was the reign of Akbar when Suka wrote his own *Rajatarangini.* Under the Mughal emperor Shahjahan (1628-58) Chandra Bhan Brahman, a Kashmiri Brahman, enjoyed prominent position at the Mughal court. He received the status of a writer of distinction. He excelled in Persian literary activities. One of his books, entitled *Manshaat-i-Brahman*, was taught in the schools of the Mughal empire.[11] He wrote an important historical work, entitled *Chahar Chaman.*[12] Sujan Rai Bhandari, a historian of Aurangzeb found Brahmans as an important segment of Kashmiri society.[13]

The Mughals treated Sanskrit language as a long lasting medium of literary and religious activities. Akbar ordered the translation of Kalhan's *Rajatarangini* into Persian. It is an established fact that Kashmir was the founder of Sanskrit historiography. Kalhan's *Rajatarangini* was first historical work of the Indian Sub-Continent. The contribution of Kalhan to the emergence of Sanskrit historiography was well recognized and appreciated by the Mughal emperor Akbar. Highlighting the Mughal emperor's interest in the *Rajatarangini* Abul Fazl writes, "When the Imperial standards were for the first time borne aloft in this garden of perpetual spring, a book called *Rajtarangini* written in Sanakrit tongue containing an account of the princes of Kashmir during a period of some four thousand years, was presented to His Majesty. It had been a custom in that country for its rulers to employ certain learned men in writing its annals. His Majesty who was desirous of extending the bounds of knowledge appointed capable interpreters in its translation which in a short time was happily accomplished."[14] According to Abdul Qadir Badaoni, Akbar used to acquire the knowledge contained by the Bahr-ul-Amsar, the Persian title of the *Rajatarangini,* translated into Persian under Zain-ul Abidin (1420-70), the Sultan of Kashmir.[15] Abul Fazl treats Sanskrit language as the most famous language from literary point of view. According to him, "Although Kashmir has a dialect of its own; their learned books are in the Sanskrit language. They have a separate character which they use for manuscript work, and they write chiefly on *Tuz* which is the bark of a tree, worked into sheets with some rude art and which keeps for years. All their ancient documents are written on this. Their ink is so prepared as to be indelible by washing. Although in ancient times, the learning of Hindus was in vogue, at the present day, various sciences are studied and their knowledge is of a more general character. Their astrological and astronomy are after the manner of Hindus."[16] The Mughul emperor Jahangir expresses the same opinion about the use of Sanakrit language for literary purposes. He found that the Brahmans experts in the Sanskrit language. According to him, "They (Brahmans have, however, books in the Sanskrit language and read them…Sanskrit a language in which learned of India have composed books, and esteem them greatly."[17] Most of the Mughal Persian sources from Akabr to Aurangzeb period regard Sanskrit as the most popular and advanced literary language of Kashmir.[18]

The Mughals estimated Kashmir as the producer of experts in the different parts of learning and they tried to promote the interests of Kashmiri experts in various fields of learning. They identified Kashmiri language at par with other language such as Hindi, Persian, Greek and Arabic contributing to productions of the books in forms of both the prose and poetry. The calligraphers of Kashmir were highly appreciated by the Mughals and invited to the Mughal court to contribute to the flourishment of calligraphy. Under Akabr and Jahangir Muhammad Husain, a Kashmiri calligrapher, enjoyed the status of the most expert and respected calligrapher. Appreciating the expertise of Muhammad Husain in the field of calligraphy and his position in the Mughal Empire Abul Fazl writes, "The artist who, in the shadow of the throne of His majestry, has become a master of calligraphy, is Muhammad Husain of Kashmir. He has been honoured with the title of *Zarrinqalam*, the golden pen. He surpassed his master Maulana Abdul Aziz."[19] Similarly, the Kashmiri poets and other writers were highly appreciated by the Mughals in terms of the quality of their works. Yaqub Kashmiri, Mazahri and Nishani, all of them were poets and belonged to Kashmir, received huge opportunity to express their talent and were appointed at the Mughal court under Akbar.[20] Sheikh Yaqub Kashmiri used to write *Qasida* for Akbar's achievements.[21] Abdul Qadir Badaoni, a reputed scholar of Akbar's period was very impressed from the writings of Yaqub Kashmiri. Badaoni writes, "He (Yaqub Kashmiri) is an epitome of all accomplishment…In spite of his having written standard works on the mysticism of the *Sufis* and many other branches of knowledge his genius was highly adapted to the composition of eloquent poetry."[22] Kashmiri poetry was given wide publicity under the Mughals and the Kashmiri poets received universal recognition. Kashmiri Persian poetry reached climax during the Mughal period. Kashmiri Persian poets not only excelled in Kashmir, but they also received reputation outside Kashmir.[23]

The Mughal categorized Kashmir as region which followed and promoted the concepts of living and working together. For them Sufis and rules of Kashmir, particularly Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin propagated tolerance, pluralism and universal brotherhood. In the Mughal chronicles Sufis of Kashmir receive considerable space. Almost all the Mughal historical works mention the contribution of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani to the cultural development in Kashmir.[24] The message of Non-violence and mutual respects spread by the *Rishis* of Kashmir are well received by the Mughal chronicles and ruling class.[25] Regarding the qualities of the *Rishis* of Kashmir Jahangir writes, "There is also a body of Faqirs whom they (Kashmiris) call *Rishis.* Though they have no religious knowledge or learning of any sort, yet they possess simplicity, and are without pretence. They abuse no one, they restrain the tongue desire for food and taste; they eat no flesh, they have no wives, and always plant fruit-bearing trees in fields, so that men may benefit by them, themselves deriving no advantage. There are about 2000 of these people."[26] The Qadiri Sufi Mulla Shah of Kashmir was the *Pir-Murshid* (Spiritual master) of the Mughal Prince Dara Shukoh. For him the Prince laid out the Pari Mahal garden. It is understood that Dara Shukohs learnt the philosophy of Unity of Being from Mulla Shah.

Besides, the ruling classes of Kashmir are also identified by the Mughals as protector of their own people and followers of the liberal policies. Except Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413) almost all rulers of Kashmir from ancient period onwards are portrayed as practitioners and promoters of work culture and prosperity in Kashmir. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin has been very much highlighted by the Mughal historical works for his benevolence and attachment to his own people. For Abul Fazl, Zain-ul-Abidin was regarded by the Kashmiris as a special servant of God and a saint.[27]

For the Mughals, Kashmir deserved the status of the most favoured region and had huge potentialities of cultural development and tourism. It is important to mention that the Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb visited Kashmir several times. They treated the lakes, springs, mountains, arts and crafts, horticulture and weather of Kashmir as the dominant components of uniqueness of the region. They did not treat all these features as the sources of their imperialistic achievements. They utitilised these resources for welfare of Kashmiri people. The products of Kashmir such as shawls, carpets and saffron were given huge publicity by the Mughals; the *Shahi Karkhanas* of Mughals encouraged the productions of Shawls in Kashmir on large scale. According to the French traveler Francois Bernier the shawl industry was largest industry of Kashmir in terms of employment.[28] Similarly, carpet industry was revived in Kashmir by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir.

The garden culture was introduced in Kashmir by the Mughals. Almost all the Mughal gardens of Kashmir are special features of Kashmiriat. They are one of the most important components of the tourist economy of Kashmir. Similarly, Hazratbal mosque, representing Kashmiriat, was ogiginally built during the reign of the Mughal emperor Shahjahan.[29]

Above all, the term Paradise for Kashmir was coined by the Mughals. It was the Mughal emperor Jahangir who called Kashmir 'Paradise on earth'.[30] Jahangir has all praise for the landscape, fauna and flora, art and crafts. Bernier calls Kashmir as the 'Paradise of Indies'.[31] From Jahangir's period onwards the term Paradise used to be associated with Kashmir almost by all the historians, travellers and poets.

The Mughal perceived Kashmir as a region possessing the potentialities of socio-economic development. They not only exploited these potentialities for the execution of their cultural policy, but, more importantly, they also converted these potentialities into the everlasting symbols of cultural identities of Kashmir. They cultural developments in Kashmir were given special importance in the Mughal Historiogarphy. The literary, artistic, architectural and commercial activities in Kashmir were given huge publicity by the Mughal historical works, paintings and poetry. They Mughals propagated both the tangible and intangible heritage of Kashmir. Under the Mughals Kashmir drew the attention of the large parts of world in terms of a region of tourism. The Mughal remains of Kashmir are some of the inseparable features of Kashmir identities. The Mughal gardens, forts and astronomical observatory are the centers of attraction for the tourist's nowadays.

Notes and references

1. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari, Vol. III*, Eng. Tr. By Col. H.S. Jarret, Corrected and further annotated by Sir J.N. Sarkar, Delhi, 1994, p.1 (Hereafter *Ain* III)
2. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama, Vol. III,* Eng Tr. By H. Beveridge, Delhi, 1973, p. 763. Abul Fazl uses the term law of Sakyamuni for the Buddhism. *Ibid.* p.763
3. Mirza Haidar Dughlat, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Eng. Tr. by E. Denison Ross, edited by N. Elias, Delhi, 1986, p. 426
4. *Ain-i-akbari, Vol. III*, Eng. Tr. by Col. H.S. Jarret, Corrected and further annotated by Sir J.N. sarkar , Delhi, 1994, p.356 (Hereafter *Ain II*)
5. *Ibid., p.360*
6. *Ibid., p.361*
7. *Ibid., p.256*
8. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Vols. I* and *II*, Eng. Tr. A. Rogers, edited by H. Beveridge, Delhi, 1994, pp.93-94 (Vol.I) and 142, 170, 173 (*Vol. II*). Jahangir mentions the existence of lofty temples in Kashmir, which were made of the stones. *Ibid.*, p.150
9. *Ain II,* p. 355
10. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri,* Vol. II, p. 150
11. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, Delhi, 1974, p.84
12. M.A. Ansari, *Geographical Glimpses of Medieval India, Vol. III*, Introduction with English abstract by Javeed Ashraf and Tasneem Ahmad, Delhi, 1989, pp. 5-7.
13. Sujan Rai Bhandari, *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, in Sir J.N. Sarkar, *India of Aurangzeb*, Calcutata, 1901, p. 112
14. *Ain II*, pp.358
15. Abdul Qadir Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol. II,* Eng. Tr. by W.H. Low, Revised and enlarged by B.P. Ambashthya, Patna, 1973, pp.415-16.
16. Ibid., p.354
17. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Vol. II*, p. 150
18. Sujan Rai Bhandari, *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh,* p. 112
19. *Ain* II, p. 109
20. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol. II,* pp.127, 134, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol. III,* Eng. Tr.by Sir Wolseley Haig, Revised and enlarged by B.P. Ambashthya, Patna, 1973, pp. 200, 360, 474m 483.
21. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.II,* p.127
22. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol. III,* p.360
23. G.D.M. Sufi, *Islamic Culture in Kashmir*, Jammu, 1999, pp. 182-201
24. *Ain II*, p. 356, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Vol.III,* p.209, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Vol. II*, p. 142

25. *Akbarnama, Vol. III,* p.828. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Vol.II,* pp.149-50
26. *Ibid.,* pp.149-50
27. *Ain II,* p.383
28. Francois Bernier, *Travels in Mughal Empire,* A.D. 1656-1668, Eng. Tr. by Archibald Constable, Delhi, 1968, pp. 402-03
29. G.D.M. Sufi, *Kashir,* Vol. II, p. 519
30. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Vol. II,* pp. 143, 173
31. *Travel,* pp.353-42

Distortions in the Literary History of Kashmir

Ghulam Nabi Khayal

Inaccuracies, misstatements and distortions have constantly blurred the face of Kashmir history. It is also unfortunate that even our literary history has not been spared from being projected in a misleading way by some biased and prejudiced writers. These writers belonging to different communities, in and outside Kashmir, and both in India and Pakistan, have interpreted this side of history mainly based on their petty considerations, communal bias, social and political prejudices and ignorance about facts.

On the contrary, it is very heartening to find that many European oriental researchers, authors and travelers wrote dispassionately about Kashmir only what they had seen with their own eyes and which became the subject of their outstanding memoirs and travelogues. Despite their having been written about one century ago, these publications seem quite relevant even in today's Kashmir. The *Valley of Kashmir* by Sir Walter R Lawrence and Tyndale Biscoe's ***Kashmir under Shade and Sunlight*** and many more such compilations still present before us a factual account of Kashmir and it seems as if these books have been authored by Kashmiri writers themselves. They have been extremely honest and truthful in their task and this should be greatly appreciated.

Aurel Stein recorded Kashmiri folk tales narrated to him by a local bard, Hatim Tilvanni in June-July 1896. Hatim hailed from the village of Panzil in Sindh Valley in north Kashmir. It had to be Stein alone and probably no one else to visit Kashmir 16 years later in 1912, to doubly check what Hatim had narrated to him earlier. Stein invited Hatim, the professional story teller to his camp in Mohin Marg and asked him to retell all those stories which by then had been transliterated by Pandit Govind Kaul and rendered into English by George Grierson. Hatim was so precise in his art and confident about his memory that he did not change or delete a single line from what he had told Stein 16 years ago. This is how records are put straight faithfully and for ultimate guidance for generations to come.

In this backdrop, when we go through the pages of *Studies in Kashmiri* authored by Prof Jiya Lal Kaul, one is completely disappointed with what he has penned down in this important publication, obviously, because of the reputed name of the author.

Kaul has devoted three independent chapters to Parmanand, Zinda Kaul and genuinely to Lal Ded, but he did not deem it fit to give the same treatment to doyens of Kashmiri poetry like Shaykh Nooruddin Noorani, Mahmood Gami, Rasool Mir, Maqbool Kralwari, Mahjoor and Abdul Ahad Azad, who surpass many Parmanands and Zinda Kauls in their poetic genius.

While commenting on Kaul's book, Amin Kamil says, "The entire knowledge Kaul claims to be possessing is a borrowed light. But, in his selfishness, he presents this borrowed material as his own. Moreover, Kaul is obsessed with narrow-mindedness which is not acceptable in the world of literature, that too, when scores of writers of present times are thousand times more literate and educated than Jiyal Lal Kaul." Kamil adds, *Studies in Kashmiri* is a shabby example of this borrowed stuff and a laughable effort to distort it."

It may not be out of place to mention here that whatever Kaul has written on Lakhman Kaul Bulbul and his *Saam Naamah*, is the copied gist and verbatim translation of my 50-page Urdu foreword written for the same epic poem which was published by the State Cultural Academy in 1962.

Prithvi Nath Kaul Bamzai in his *A History of Kashmir makes a sweeping remark* saying, "Parmanand has left a deep stamp of his mystic and humane thought on Kashmiri poetry, unsurpassed by any writer since then[2]." This is a disgusting exaggeration because we may not be able to find a single Kashmiri poet after Parmanand who has accepted even an iota of influence on his writings from this poet about whom Azad says and rightly so, that he is rather difficult to understand because of his Sanskritised language.

Trilokinath Raina's *A History of Kashmiri Literature* is a hotchpotch done in a huff without getting into required research-based endeavour to present the work on the lines of seriousness and credibility. Its many chapters are simply a rendering into English of what Moti Lal Saqi had penned down in his memorable *Gashir Munar* detailing the lives and works of Kashmiri writers. Riana has been so callous and casual in his work that spellings of names of writers differ from each other on different pages, very disappointingly.

About Mahjoor, one T N Kaul writes, "Eminent poets like Tagore and Iqbal who were his contemporaries acknowledged his greatness as a poet and his role in enriching the Kashmiri language." This statement made by a former scribe, Kaul, has never been proved with authenticity and documentary evidence. Kaul has also committed an objectionable blunder by way of giving a political twist to Mahjoor's satiric poem *Azaadi*, (Freedom), to which Kaul has given his own title: Freedom and Partition[3].

While his hero, Maqbool Sherwani, traveled from Srinagar to Baramullah, Dr Mulk Raj Anand alone could see that the mountains of Gulmarg were standing on his right and not the left[4]. It could also be a novelist like Dr. Anand, the master of sharpest hearing sense, who heard sound of gunshots taking place far away in Ganderbal when he was himself sitting in Baramullah.

An eminent Indian educationist and writer, Prof Mohammad Mujeeb also gets trapped in a similar dragnet laid by pseudo historians and experts on Kashmir when he says about Habba Khatoon, "In my opinion, Habba Khatoon's ideology was embellished in colours of mysticism. She did not rally around materialistic values, but her cherished goal was humanity which is derived from the purity of religion, morality and politics[5]."

In his 66-page drama, *Diyaa Bujh Gaya*, depicting the tribal raid on Kashmir in 1947, Kartar Singh Duggal, illustrates before his Indian readers a strange and unreal picture of our social life. In the hamlet of a poor villager, where they cannot afford to have supply of electricity and the evenings are lit with an earthen lamp, he finds that royal dishes like *pulaav, Kabab, Qorma and Do piyaaza* are served over there with meals. He also tries to make us believe that a disgruntled Kashmiri mother can herself offer liquor to her own son. This may be an established truth for the Punjabi society but one cannot imagine such practice in any Kashmiri house, that too in a rural area.

Saleem Khan Gummi is a noted Pakistani writer who authored a comprehensive book on Kashmir titled *Kashmir: Adab aur Saqaafat*. Again, we are at loss to understand as to why Pakistani writers, more often than not, try to meddle in frivolous politicking when they are discussing other lovable subjects like language, literature or history. This is perhaps their age-old obsession with a vexed Kashmir problem. Gummi's following stanzas could also testify his being very partial about matters pertaining to Kashmir tangle:

"On 13 July, 1931, the officials of Srinagar jail arrested Muslim leaders which turned the crowd into an unruly one. Police and army resorted to gunfire and nineteen Muslims were martyred[6].

"Pandit Pitambar Nath Dhar is not only a freedom fighter, but is also a suppressed person. In 1951, National Conference arrested him for political reasons. He was incarcerated in Srinagar Jail for ten months and was thereafter put into exile in Delhi[7].

Surprisingly, this book makes references to known and unknown Kashmir writers like Ghulam Rasool Nazki, Tanha Ansari, Pardesi, Prof Sharma, Ghulam Ahmad Kashfi; Prof Fazili and Mr Kaul, but names of our prominent literary personalities including Ahmad Batwari, Ahad Zargar, Hairat Pandani, Samad Mir, Fazil Kashmiri, Rasa Javidani, Saifuddin Tarabali Lassa Khan Fida and Mohinuddin Miskeen are not seen anywhere in this publication.

About Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor, Gummi is seemingly again swayed by an undercurrent of political nostalgia and that's why he says, "13 July 1931 shall be remembered as the day when Muslims of Srinagar sowed the seeds of freedom which bloomed into a colourful flower. It was in search of this flower that Mahjoor was jailed in 1947 and in prison, he died while raising the slogan of *Pakistan Zindabad*, Long live Pakistan[8]."

In fact, Mahjoor was a cleverly opportunistic person who always preferred to worship the rising sun. He is the only poet of Kashmiri languages who wrote a long laudatory poem, *Qaseedah*, in praise of Maharaja Hari Singh on the occasion of latter's coronation in 1925. In 1946, when Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah launched the popular Quit Kashmir movement and he was arrested along with his political colleagues, the same Mahjoor composed a poem in Persian lauding the Baramullah Governor, Pandit Bal Kak Dhar, for his throwing Abdullah and others behind the bars and branded them as thieves and looters. Mahjoor addresses Dhar in this deplorable way of sycophancy.

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Aiy sar-e-sarwaraan-e-aali jah
Yadgaar-e-qiblai jaah-o-hashm
Aamadi baa hazaar jaah-o-hashm
Maa fugandeam dar rahat sar haa
Az wajood-e-garooh-e-raah zanaan
Bood ein zameen pur az shar haa
Soi zindaan ba hukm-e-tou reftand
Ein hamah saariqaan-o-leader haa
(O! The most dignified of dignified ones,
You are the noble symbol of Dhar clan,
You came with all glory and grandeur,
And we bowed with our heads on your path,
This land of ours had been polluted,
With the presence of thieves,
You ordered them to be in jail,
These looters and dacoits!

After 1947, when same Sheikh Abdullah, in the words of Mahjoor, a thief, ascended the seat of power in Kashmir, Mahjoor was left with no option open to him but to take a quick U-turn for becoming more loyal than the king for the new order. He thus wrote a famous poem the opening stanza of which must still be reverberating in the minds of Abdullah's political followers:

Kemi sanaa badloav son taqdeer
Qaid-azam Sher-e-Kashmir.
(Who changed the destiny of Kashmiris? It is none else than
the Great Leader; Sher-e-Kashmir, the Lion of Kashmir).

We have already rejected out rightly and categorically, baseless assertions made by Jagan Nath Azad in his booklet *Iqbal aur Kashmir* wherein he says that (a) it was Allama Iqbal who advised Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to change the nomenclature of Muslim Conference to National Conference so that non-Muslims are also brought into new political fold, and (b) Iqbal paid tributes to Abdullah and Molvi Ghulam Nabi Hamadani in his *Javed Namah*[9].

Habib Kaifvi's voluminous ***Kashmir mein Urdu*** is also full of such discrepancies and contradictory assumptions which tell upon the credibility of this publication. He says that Karl Burkhard translated both ***Laila Majnoon*** and ***Yusuf Zulaikha*** of Mahmood Gami into German though Burkhard rendered only ***Yusuf Zulaikha*** into his language. Kaifvi includes some Abdullah Zargar and Arif into the fraternity of revolutionary Kashmiri poets. We don't have any body of the name of Abdulah Zargar and Mirza Arif joined the Progressive Writers Association for a brief period only. He then bade good bye to Progressivism and formed a separate rightist ***Kashmir Bazm-e-Adab***.

Mrs Abdul Qadir was a famous Urdu writer known for her short stories of mystery and science fiction. In her short story Muallim ka Raaz, she finds saffron fields near Akhnoor in Jammu province[10].

In the memorable Kashmir Number brought by ***Nusrat***, Lahore, in February 1960, Sadat Hassan Mantoo has included along with his brief write-up on Kashmir, five so-called poems of Mahjoor. These poems could never be traced in the collected works of Mahjoor. It seems that Mantoo has himself been misled by one Naseer Anwar who had translated these poems of Mahjoor into Urdu, though Mantoo himself admits that Naseer belonged to Gilgit and, probably, was not well versed with Kashmiri language[11].

Among such writers, not taking pains to ascertain facts on Kashmir, both in India and Pakistan, mention may be made of Quratul Ain Hyder, Qudratullah Shahab, A. Hameed, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Krishen Chandar, Mahender Nath, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Aziz Ahmad, Hayatullah Ansari, Suhail Azimabadi, Kanwal Nain Parwaz, Prakash Pandit, Izhar Asar and many more who have lost track of many realities in their endeavour to cover literary world of Kashmir.

I could only speak about those publications which are available with me, and I hope that some other friends shall delve very deep into this interesting subject to present things on Kashmir's literary world in their correct perspective.

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Kashmiriyat: A World View

M.H. Zaffar

Kashmir has been a highly advanced seat of learning since ancient times. It has been at the cross currents of many cultures and religions. The spiritual and intellectual landscape of the Valley has always been a nodal point for different parts of the world like Iran, Central Asia, China and Arabia for exchange of scholarly ideas on religion, philosophy, art and literature. The cultural heritage of Kashmir is therefore very rich. Like every other developed culture, Kashmiri culture also seeks to resolve the eternal and universal predicament of man. Every rich culture seeks to provide the answers to the most fundamental questions regarding the origin and the purpose of Existence. Some of these questions may be stated as under:

1. What is the nature and origin of the Universe? Has it any purpose? If, Yes, what is that purpose?
2. What is the nature and purpose of human existence?
3. What is the relation between man and the Universe of which he forms a part?

History of the evolution of human thought reveals that different cultures, different thinkers and spiritually evolved individuals have articulated and responded to these questions in their own particular way. Notwithstanding their claim to universality, these answers also bear the imprint of Spatio-temporal conditioning.

For the distinctive identity and the survival of any cultural tradition, it is essential that it should have its roots in the soil of a world view, which should be so broad, deep and rich, that it could nurture and sustain that culture for considerable period of time and also assist it in maintaining and extending its space.

Kashmiri culture has been founded and nurtured by those saints, called Rishi and Sufis, in whose name Kashmir is still known as **Rishwari** or abode of Rishis. The foundational layers of Kashmiri cultural tradition are informed by the World-view which comprises mainly the intellectual and spiritual labour of these Rishis. And Centuries ago Kashmiri culture provided answers to the questions mentioned above.

The majority of European historians call the medieval period of the world history as the 'Dark Ages' ignoring the fact that this period happens to be the most bright and enlightened period for many regions of Asia, which become the harbingers of light for other parts of the World. Islam was born or rather re-born during this period and the World was enriched and enlightened by its message. Islamic culture gave a boost to the evolution of knowledge. The Greek Science had a rebirth in the Muslim World. In Kashmir also, the growth and evolution of knowledge was remarkable during this period. When Kashmir, Baghdad and Damascus were great centers of knowledge and enlightenment, most parts of the Europe were engulfed in the darkness of superstition and ignorance.

It is really unfortunate that many European scholars and historians of Ideas, while writing about the evolution of human knowledge, ignore the contribution of non European people to the evolution of human thought and attempt at projecting Europe as the only region where human knowledge and science has its origin, and where it has grown and evolved. Undoubtedly, the edifice of contemporary science stands on the foundations laid by the ancient Greeks; but this is also a fact that non-European people, especially the Muslims and the Indians also contributed significantly in erecting the edifice.

From the 6th century C.E to the 11th century C.E Kashmir was considered to be the seat of learning and knowledge, in the part of the world. Throughout the Indian sub-continent it was known as **S'ardapith** i,e. the abode of Sarasvati, the Goddess of knowledge. During the 7th Century C.E the 4th Buddhist Council was held here. Holding of this council in the Valley is a proof of the fact that Kashmir held the position of centrality from the point of view of the development of knowledge and learning, although geographically it happens to be on the margins of the sub-continent. The objective of this council was to reach a consensus regarding the basic tenets of Buddhism. It is said that the famous scholar Ashvaghosh played a very significant role in the conduct of this Council.

In Buddhist thought Nirvana is possible only by removing the wrong knowledge about self and realizing the principle of non-self or shunya, whereas in Saivism the recognition of self, which is the sole and ultimate reality, is the only way to liberation. Buddhism was divided into two sects, Hinayana and Mahayana. Hinayanis are of the view that an individual should concern himself with his own Nirvana and that is possible if he follows the righteous eight-fold path as shown by Buddha. But Mahayanees are of the view that individual Nirvana is of little significance unless and until the realized one aims and attempts for the Nirvana of all his fellow beings. They advocate that although Gautama had attained enlightenment, he came back to his fellow men as Buddha to assist them in attaining enlightenment. The Saivistic approach to liberation is informed by the principles of Mahayana Buddhism. The enlightened one has to come back to the society for the enlightenment of his fellow beings and this is corroborated by the life and message of Nund-Rishi as well.

Kashmiri Buddhist scholars achieved great excellence in logic which informs the philosophy of the monistic Saivism also. With the erosion of Buddhism in Kashnir, Saivism re-surfaced in the Valley during the 9th Century and gradually became popular among the masses. Prior to Buddhism, Saivism was prevalent in Kashmir, but it was not a monistic creed. But the Saivism that became popular after the decline of Buddhism and which is also known as Trikamat, and the basic text of which is Vasu Gupta's *Saiva-sutra*, is a monistic doctrine, in which there is no scope for any kind of duality.

Vasu Gupts's *Saiva-sutras* comprise 77 sutras. These sutras are more like riddles and coded statements and need interpretation and de-codification. The first two sutras are quoted here to illustrate the point. The first sutra reads:

CHAITANYAMATMA

Which means:

Consciousness is the nature of reality

Or

Consciousness is the self

Or

Consciousness is the essence of reality which is the self

The 2nd Sutra is:

JNANMBANDHA

Which means:

Knowledge is bondage

Or

Empirical & discursive knowledge leads to the bondage of the agent.

Of all the commentaries written on the *Saiva-sutras* Khemraj's commentary is considered to be the most authentic. Khemraj was a disciple of Abhinava Gupta so the commentary must have been written some time during the 11th Century.

The literature of monistic Saivism consists of three parts

1. Agam Shastra
2. Spanda Shastra
3. Pratyabhijna Shastra.

1.Agam Shastra:- it comprises revealed books. These books are not the product of human intelligence or experience, their origin is believed to be spiritual in nature. Among them *Shiv-sutra* is considered to be the most significant; and it is also called *Shiv-upanishad.*

2.Spand Shastra:- These are the treatises wherein the Agam Shastras are interpreted and commented upon; the two important books belonging to this segment are Spand Karika and Spand Sandoha.

3.Pratyabhijna Shastra:- Literally it means the discipline of self-recognition. This part consists of works, wherein Saivism is presented as a school of thought, as well as a world-view. The fundamental principles of the system are analyzed and an effort is made to prove their validity through rational and logical arguments; and arguments based on the experience of the agent himself. The most significant works belonging to this segment are:

1.Ishwar Pratyabhijna__Utpalacharya

2.Ishwar Pratyabhijna Vimarshini__Abhinava Gupta

3.Ishwar Pratyabhijna Vivarti Vimarshini__ Abhinava Gupta.

Even after Abhinava Gupta, right upto the age of Lal-ded, the debate regarding the principles of Saivism continued among the scholars and many works were also produced. On the other hand those interested in their spiritual well-being continued practicing their spiritual growth and evolution. But the fact remains that no scholar or practitioner could match the achievements of Abhinava Gupta. And even today Abhinava Gupta is considered to be the chief exponent of Kashmir Saivism.

Due to varied political, social, religious and linguistic reasons, Kashmiri people lost their hold on Sanskrit. Consequently we could not benefit from the huge corpus of literature produced by our ancestors by their hard labour in the language. But Lal Ded is the most significant bridge that connects our present to our past. Lal Ded, the saint-poet was the product of the creed preached by Vasu Gupta in the 9th Century and the Philosophy propounded by Abhinava Gupta in the 10th and 11th Centuries. All the works on Saivism are in Sanakrit language. But the essence of this literature is present in the Kashmiri poetry of Lal Ded.

The etymological meaning of the word 'Siva' is good. According to Saivism the ultimate and the eternal reality is 'Absolute Good'. The Universe is the manifestation of the Absolute Good or Saiva. This absolute good is an infinite eternal and conscious light, which is also manifested through space and time. So, the Universe is a manifestation of the absolute reality and this reality is absolute conscious light. Man is also a ray of the same light. The goal and purpose of human life is to recognize this absolute and eternal reality.

Self-Recognition is the ultimate intrinsic value for Saivism. Since all creation has only one origin and source, there is no question of inequality among humans on the spiritual plane. But to realize this value man has to strive very hard. Saivism is not a mere bookish philosophy; rather it is a spiritual course of action for the realization of this end. And the living proof of it is the poet Lal Ded, whose poetry forms the foundation of Kashmiri cultural tradition. The path Lal has treated for the realization of the value of self-recognition is quite discernible in her poetry. She says:

Ye'my lub manmath mad tsur morun
Who slays the highway robbers three,
Greed, Lust and Pride,
And yet, in utter humility, serves
His fellow-men-
He truly seeks out the Lord

Disregarding as worthless ashes
All other things.
Zanam pra'vith vyabhav no tsondum
In life I sought neither wealth nor power,
Nor ran after the pleasures of sense.
Moderate in food and drink, I lived a controlled life,
Patiently bore my lot, my pain and poverty,
And loved my God.
Shiv chuy thali rozan
Siva abides in all that is, everywhere
Then do not discriminate between
A Hindu or a Musalman.
If thou art wise, know thyself;
That is true knowledge of the Lord.
Diva vata divur vata
The idol is but stone,
The temple is but stone,
From top to bottom all is stone,
Whom will you worship, O! stubborn Pandit?
Let prana and the mind unite
(as an offering to your God).
Kava chukh divan anine ba'tsh
Why do you grope thus like the blind?
Pray, doubt not what I say to you:
If you are wise, enter within
And see the Lord Himself is there.
You need not search Him here and there.

Nund Rishi follows the spirit of Lal Ded and recognizing her position and honoring her memory, prays thus;

(It was) Lalla of Padmanpora
Who drank, in long draughts, nectar divine?
A beloved Avtar she was to us, too:
May thou, Lord bestow a similar boon upon me!

Nund Rishi like Lal-Ded is monotheistic and for him also self-recognition is the ultimate and absolute value. Keeping in with his cultural tradition, he also marks a path for the realization of this value; Saying:

Call not the self bad;
Thou hast to deal with it, always:
Within bounds, should thou restrain the self?
For God is attained by recognizing it.
Close by me stood He, and I by Him,
Relaxed felt I by His very side;
Wrongly had I looked for Him in alien lands,
(When) I found solace within myself.
I ferried my boat with an oar,
I slayed Vanity, Greed and Attachment,
And looked for the Lord, with an undivided mind:
Thus did I recognize my own soul.
I looked for Him in the Bhavans and six directions,
Neither any mark nor clue did I come upon:
I enquired of the Mullahs and the Hermits:
Hearing me they only bemoaned (their ignorance).
As I subdued my logic and doubts,
Lo! I found Him all-pervading and myself naught.

From this we can infer that self recognition is not possible through discursive and logical knowledge, rather one can proceed on this path only when one gives up all the observational logical and rational means and supports of knowledge. Nund-Reshi's spiritual vision is not very different from the vision of Lal-Ded. Nurrudin Rishi's greatness does not lie only in the fact that in a new religio-socio-political milieu he nurtured the spiritual and cultural heritage of Lal-Ded; rather his real greatness is exhibited in his lifelong efforts for making these values an integral part of the collective consciousness of Kashmiris and simultaneously he worked for creating and enhancing the social space for these values.

The self whose knowledge is sought both by Lal-Ded and Nundi-Reshi is a non-temporal and non-spatial entity. Therefore one of the common assumptions in both of them is that the self is not knowable through sense experience or reason. The basic formula of all Kashmiri Sufi poetry is this very concept of the self which is beyond space and time.

The spiritual values that we have inherited from Lal-Ded and Nund-Reshi have been a great source of inspiration for all our Sufi poets; even to this day. With their own spiritual experiences they have broadened, enhanced and enriched this tradition. In this regard a number of examples can be cited. Since, the self is conceived beyond space and time, therefore its knowledge does not involve any historical, social and political references.

The self-recognition as an intrinsic and absolute value also emerges in the non-Sufi literature produced during the 20th century. But the self whose knowledge is sought in this literature is predominantly a product of space and time; consequently, the knowledge of this self is possible only through empiric-rational means and methods.

From the above discussion it becomes amply clear that self recognition as a value form the foundation of entire Kashmiri literature and it is this absolute value which serves as the source of other values, like equality, fraternity, human brotherhood, love and compassion. Kashmiri culture and the literature which expresses and articulates it, is a reflection of this very principle. The belief that the entire universe springs and originates from only one source is the foundation of Kashmiri Culture. There is only one origin of all light and to recognize and realize this source is an absolute and ultimate aim of human life.

Culture is not an event, but a continuous process. Change in cultures is a natural phenomenon. In the beginning, we said that any culture should have for its foundation, a rich and broad world view, which should have a Universal appeal in addition to its Spatio-temporal relevance. The ultimate and absolute value of self-recognition forms the foundation of Kashmiri Culture and this foundation is ancient. But when the horizons of Kashmir were enlightened by the message of Islam, the Islamic thought and practice not only nurtured this foundational value of our culture but also played a significant role in its growth and realization, that is why right from Lal-Ded and Nund Reshi upto the contemporary poets and to practioners of spiritual discipline, this spiritual tradition and heritage has been transmitted from generation to generation by oral tradition and folklore, and forms an integral and significant part of the Kashmiri consciousness.

Critiques Of Popular Sufism: Implications for the Notion of 'Kashmiriyat'

Yoginder Sikand

INTRODUCTION

'Kashmiriyat' is a term and a concept that is difficult to define. It is generally taken to refer to a certain way of understanding of Kashmiri culture and history and the distinct regional identity of the people of the Kashmir valley, both Muslims as well as Pundits. In this way of conceiving Kashmiri identity, internal differences and contradictions, of class, caste and religion and so on, are often sought to be denied or papered over. Likewise, cultural and religious links and bonds between the different religious communities in the Valley and their co-religionists elsewhere are also generally ignored, and Kashmir is presented somewhat as a self-contained unit in terms of culture. There is a marked tendency among proponents of the thesis of 'Kashmiriyat' to consider Kashmiri regional identity and the identities of different communities who live in Kashmir as frozen and static, overlooking the marked transformations of these identities over time. Further, the notion of Kashmiriyat' as the basis of a broader regional identity is clearly limited. It finds little or no resonance with communities, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Dalits, who live outside the narrow confines of the Kashmir Valley.

The popular Sufi traditions of Kashmir, most notably those associated with the indigenous Rishi order, are often presented as forming a basic ingredient of the notion of 'Kashmiriyat'. In this way of imagning Kashmiri identity, popular Sufism is seen as bringing together Kashmiris of different faiths in a common cultural broadly-defined religious universe. Although it is true that the popular Sufi traditions did help shape a certain sense of regional Kashmiri identity, this identity was certainly not internally tension-free. One must guard against the tendency to romanticize these traditions as they developed over time, including their role in promoting ecumenism transcending religious and caste boundaries. Furthermore, the popular Sufi traditions have never been static. They have been in a constant process of evolution and transformation. Over time, a process has been underway to move towards closer conformity with a certain way of understanding normative, *Shari 'ah*-based Islam. Hence, reformers, particularly from the late nineteenth century onwards, have sought to critique aspects of these traditions, arguing that they have no sanction in the *Shari 'ah*. Some critics have even gone so far as to brand Sufism of all varieties as un-Islamic. In this way, the popular Sufi traditions of Kashmir, that are often sought to be marshalled as a resource for the political project of 'Kashmiriyat', have been transforming over time, not remaining, as some proponents of the thesis of 'Kashmiriyat' make it out to be, static and frozen.

This paper seeks to explore the ways in which *Shari 'ah*-centric Islamic reformist movements have sought to relate to the deep-rooted popular Sufi traditions in Kashmir. In this way, it seeks to highlight certain salient points that proponents of an idealistic and romanticized notion of 'Kashmiriyat' often seem to ignore. The implications these have for the notion of 'Kashmiriyat' are obvious.

The paper looks at critiques of popular Sufism in Kashmir from the early twentieth century onwards in the form of two separate Islamic movements, the Ahl-i Hadith and the Jama 'at-i-Islami. Among the important questions that this paper seeks to deal with are the different ways in which the Ahl-i Hadith and the Jama 'at constructed their opposition to popular Sufism and their own understanding of authentic Islam; the reaction of the defenders of the cults of the Sufi saints to the attacks by both these groups; and the changing notions of religious authority that these attacks seemed to suggest. In looking at these intra-Kashmiri Muslim debates, the paper highlights the plural understanding of 'true' Islam and the heated contestations over it by various claimants. It also highlights the fact that the popular Sufi traditions are a contested as well as changing phenomenon, the subject of considerable internal critique and debate, a fact that proponent of an idealized image of 'Kashmiriyat' often tend to ignore.

The paper begins with a brief overview of the history of the spread of Islam in Kashmir, noting that this was almost entirely synonymous with the efforts of generations of various Sufi missionaries belonging to different orders (*silsilahs*). It then examines the emergence of the Ahl-i Hadith, followed by the Jama 'at, in Kashmir, looking at how these movements for 'reform' of popular devotion sought to relate to the powerfully rooted popular Sufi traditions in the region. This is followed by a conclusion which discusses the implications of the arguments made here for the notion of 'Kashmiriyat'.

SUFI AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM IN KASHMIR

The history of conversion to Islam in Kashmir as a mass movement owes much to the peaceful efforts of various Sufis in the area beginning from the early fourteenth century after the establishment of the region's first Muslim dynasty (Bukhari 1998:4). In this process, various Sufis had a crucial role to play. The earliest known Sufi in Kashmir was the Turkistani Suhrawardi Hazrat Sayyed Ṣharfuddin 'Abdur Rahman, more commonly known as Bulbul Shah. As a wandering dervish, Hazrat Bulbul Shah travelled extensively in west and central Asia before finally arriving in Kashmir in 1295 C.E., in the reign of the last Hindu king of Kashmir, Raja Suha Dev. It is believed that he stayed in Kashmir for a short while on his first trip and returned to central Asia, but later came back in 1324 C.E. in the reign of the Buddhist ruler Rinchen Shah, in whose conversion to Islam he played a central role (Kardar 1979: 48). Following the conversion of Rinchen Shah and his family, several other leading Kashmiris also followed suit, most notably Rawanchandra, son of the Hindu king Ramachandra who had been deposed by Rinchen Shah. It is said that, in all, in all, Hazrat Bulbul Shah succeeded in making some ten thousand converts to Islam through means of peaceful missionary effort, although this figure seems considerably exaggerated (Rafiq 1979:27).

The next Sufi of note to preach in Kashmir was the Iranian Kubrawi, Hazrat Mir Sayyed 'Ali Hamadani (b.1313/ 14 C.E), who is credited with having made numerous converts in the area. He established a Sufi hospice, the Khanqah-I Mu 'alla, on the banks of the Jhelum in the heart of Srinagar, adjacent to the city's main temple, which he built into a center for his missionary endeavours. Hazrat Mir Sayyed 'Ali was a great scholar and profuse writer, and penned numerous Sufi treatises in Persian and Arabic. Although he was strict in matters of the *shari 'ah*, he understooding the need to present Islam in a form intelligible to the Kashmiri. Thus, he introduced in the mosques the loud, collective chanting of litanies in praise of god and the Prophet before every prayer, the *Aurad-I-Fathiyya*, resembling the chanting of *mantras* in Hindu temples in Kashmir. This practice is still followed in most mosques in Kashmir till today, and is a distinguishing feature of Islam in the area, being unknown elsewhere.

This accommodation to the local Kashmiri context did not proceed far enough, however. Hazrat Mir Sayyed 'Ali and his Iranian disciples who had accompanied him to Kashmir wrote and preached in Persian and Arabic, which few Kashmiris could understand. Further, they were based largely in Srinagar, close to the royal court, and thus had few links with the Kashmiri masses, most of whom resided in far-flung villages. It was left to Hazrat Nuruddin Nurani (1356-1440), commonly known as Nund Rishi, to transform conversion to Islam into a mass movement, by expressing it in a form rooted in pre-Islamic Kashmiri traditions, using these traditions as a vehicle for the spread of Islam.

Nund Rishi was born in 1356 C.E. at the village of Kaimuh, the son of a poor Rajput family that had recently converted to Islam. Following in the path of the Hindu and Buddhist mendicants or Rishi before him, he renounced the world at the age of thirty-two, retiring to caves in the mountains and performing severe austerities. Some years later he is believed to have come under the influence of Hazrat Mir Muhammad Hamadani, the son of Hazrat Mir Sayyed 'Ali Hamadani, after which he resolved to transform the Rishi movement into a vehicle for social transformation and the spread of Islam. Renouncing the world, Nund Rishi now came to believe, was an act of cowardice and tantamount to escapism. A true Rishi, he stressed, must actively intervene in the world, taking the side of the poor and the oppressed and crusading for social justice, based on the recognition of the equality of all human beings in the eyes of the one God.

Under Nund Rishi and his deputies (*khulafa*), Rishism emerged as a powerful social movement, bitterly critiquing the oppression of the Brahmins and of the 'ulama attached to the royal court. Nund Rishi's poetic composition, replete with motifs based on the everyday life of the toiling people, his denunciation of meaningless ritualism and his scathing attack social elites attracted large numbers of Kashmiris, mainly from among the 'lower' castes, into the Muslim fold. For these converts, Islam did not, however, appear as a radically new or alien religion, and this, in fact, facilitated the conversion process. The genius of the missionary approach of the Muslim Rishis lay in their successful effort to inculcate their message in a form that ordinary Kashmiris could understand. Thus, in contrast to the Brahmins, who despised the Kashmiri language as 'barbaric' and preached in Sanskrit, and to the Iranian and Central Asian '*ulama* attached to the royal court, who spoke and wrote in Arabic and Persian, the Rishis preached in the language of the people, employing the genre of poetry to readily appeal to the masses. Indeed, Nund Rishi's own poetic compositions, considered among the gems of Kashmiri literature, were granted the status of Koshur Qur'an or the Kashmiri commentary on the Muslim Holy Scripture. Further, the lifestyle of the Muslim Rishis drew heavily upon pre-Islamic traditions. Thus, many of them spent long periods in forests and caves, practicing stern austerities. They remained strict vegetarians, going so far as to avoid eating even green vegetables for fear of taking the life of any sentient being. Most of them remained unmarried. For these and other seeming transgressions of the Islamic law, the Rishis were sharply rebuked by many '*ulama*, who could not appreciate that it was only through such accommodation to the local context that Islam could make any headway among the Kashmiris (Khan 1997).

Over time, Muslim Rishism emerged as the most popular Sufi order in Kashmir, and the only indigenous *silsilah*. Yet, over the years, as Islam came to consolidate itself among the Kashmiris, the Rishi order was gradually absorbed into more *Shari 'ah*-observant *silsilahs*. The turning point in this regard was the initiation by the then head of the Rishis, the seventeenth Baba Harde [Haider] Rishi of Anantnag (Islamabad), into the Suhrawardi order at the hands of the leading Suhrawardi Sufi of his day, Sheikh Makhdum Hamza. Presumably by that time almost all of Kashmir had accepted Islam, at least nominally, and this act might be understood as signifying that the popular tradition had, in a sense, outlived its usefulness, as a means for the spread of Islam of Kashmir. Although after that the Rishi order ceased to exist as an independent *silsilah*, the graves (*Astana, Dargah*) of the Rishis, scattered all over rural Kashmir, continued to attract large numbers of Kashmiris, including many Hindus (Sikand 2000).

TWENTIETH CENTURY TRANSFORMATIONS IN KASHMIRI SUFISM

Till the end of the nineteenth century, Sufism remained the dominant expression of Islam among the Sunnis of Kashmir. Sufi shrines dotted the Valley, controlled by a class of religious intermediaries (Sajjada Nashins, Makhdums, Pirzadas) [2] many of who claimed descent from the buried saints.

Over time, many custodians emerged as powerful landlords, some having been granted estates as *jagirs* by various rulers. Rituals at the shrines included many practices that were later to be condemned as un-Islamic, including prostrating before graves, music, and sacrificing animals and even, in a few cases, consumption of drugs. Singing of Sufi music at shrines on ritual occasion was a common phenomenon. Other practices included sacrificing cocks to ward off attacks of small pox; distributing food at shrines; revering relics attributed to saints and to the Prophet; and believing in magical portents and in spirits. Writing at the turn of the nineteenth century, Walter Lawrence, Settlement Commissioner of the Jammu and Kashmir state remarked on the 'laxness', 'indifference' and 'apathy' in matters of religion of the Sunni Muslims Of the Kashmir. Commenting on the common practices which Islamic reformers were to castigate as 'un-Islamic', he wrote, echoing the sentiments of the reformers, with some exaggeration thus:

> The indifference shown in the matter of mosques and Mullahs may be accounted for by the fact that the Kashmiri Sunnis are only Musalmans in name. in their hearts they are Hindus, and the religion of Islam is too abstract to satisfy their superstitious cravings, and they turn from the mean priest and the mean mosque to the pretty shrines of carved wood and roof bright with the iris flowers where the saints of past time lie buried (Lawrence 1895: 286-87).

Nineteenth century Kashmir lacked a well-developed class of '*ulama* well versed in the intricacies of the *Shari 'ah*, thus leaving the custodians of the shrines as the main source of religious authority for the Kashmiri Muslims. Although under the Sultans of Kashmir and later, under the Mughals, Kashmir boasted of several *madrasas* for the training of '*ulama*, in the decades of Sikh and then Dogra rule the *madrasas* fell into rapid decline, bereft of royal patronage and victims of what was undoubtedly the anti-Muslim policy of the new rulers. Small *maktabs* attached to mosques continued to function, but larger *madrasas* were almost extinct. For higher religious training in the *Shar 'iah* Kashmiris were forced to travel to Punjab and Delhi, but only a few managed to do so. On the whole, then, Kashmir remained cut off from the wave of Islamic reform that had begun to spread in north India with Shah Waliullah of Delhi and his followers. Under the Hindu Dogra rulers, Muslims, who formed the vast majority of the population of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, accounting for over 80% of the population, remained an ill-treated, oppressed community, mired in poverty and almost completely illiterate. The Raja treated the entire state as his personal possession. In a letter to the British Resident in 1897, the then Dogra Raja, Maharaja Pratap Singh, wrote, 'the state is my property and belongs to me and it is all my hereditary property' (Committee 1993: 34). Most lands in the Kashmir Valley were owned by the Raja himself and a small class of the Dogra feudal nobility and the Kashmiri Pandits, who exercised a virtual monopoly in the state services. In 1921, a Pandit writer noted that 90% of the houses of the Mulsims of Srinagar, the state capital, were mortgaged to Hindu moneylenders (in Bose 1997:24). As Prem Nath Bazaz, one of the few Kashmiri Pandits to have empathised with the plight of his Muslim countrymen and to have supported them in their cause for freedom, wrote, 'Dressed in rags which could hardly hide his body, and barefooted, a [Kashmiri] Muslim peasant presented the appearance rather of a starving beggar than one who filled the coffers of the state'. Most Kashmiri Muslim villagers, he said, were 'landless labourers working for absentee landlords. They hardly earned, as their share of the produce, enough for more than three months', being forced to spend the rest of the year unemployed or laboring in the towns in British India (Committee 1993: 34).

By the closing years of the nineteenth century, new stirrings of change began to emerge, and the Kashmiri Muslims, mired in poverty, came increasingly into contact with developments from outside Kashmir. The origins of Islamic reformism in Kashmir go back to the late nineteenth century, which witnessed the emergence of a urban Kashmiri Muslim middle-class, championing the interests of the Muslim majority community against Dogra rule. One of the pioneers in this regard was the Mirwa'iz of Kashmir, the head of Srinagar's Jami'a mosque, Maulvi Rasul Shah (1855-1909). Distressed by the pathetic conditions of his people and the widespread prevalence of what he saw as 'un-Islamic' innovations among them, particularly customs associated with popular Sufism, he established the Anjuman Nusrat ul-Islam ('Society for the Victory of Islam') in 1899. The Anjuman aimed at spreading modern as well as Islamic education, based strictly on the *Shari 'ah*, combating *bid 'at* as well as creating political awareness among the Muslims of the state (Faruq n.d.: 17). Through mass meetings and personal contacts, the Mirwa'iz and his associates preached against the 'superstitions' and practices associated with popular Sufism, calling for Muslims to mould their lives according to the *shari 'ah*, and, 'to become real Muslims (*haqiqi musalaman*) and true human beings (*sahih insane*)' (Anjuman 1982:6). The Mirwa'iz seems to have encountered stiff opposition from some quarters, notably from some custodians (*mutawalis*) of Sufi shrines, led by the rival Mirwa'iz of the Shah-i-Hamadan shrine (Zutshi 2000:111), but his efforts at preaching his reformist doctrines earned him considerable popularity, particularly among a section of the Muslim traders of Srinagar (Anjuman n.d).

In 1905, the Anjuman set up the Islamiya High School in Srinagar, where modern scientific as well as Islamic education were imparted, and, over the years, it established several branches in small towns in Kashmir. Rasul Shah was succeeded by his younger brother, Mirwa'iz Ahmadullah, who expanded the work of the Anjuman further, setting up an oriental College in Srinagar. Under his successor, Mirwa'iz Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf Shah, the Anjuman development links with Islamic reformist groups in India. Yusuf Shah was himself a product of the reformist Dar-ul 'Ulum *madrasa* at Deoband (for a full-length study of the Deobandis see Metcalf 1982)[3], and after he returned to Kashmir on completion of his studies in 1934, he set up a branch of the Khilafat Committee to promote the cause of the Ottoman Caliphate among the Kashmiris. Later, he played a central role in bringing many reform minded Kashmiri '*ulama*, mainly Deobandis opposed to popular Sufism, onto a common platform, the Jami 'at-ul 'Ulama-i-Kashmir ('The Union of '*Ulama* of Kashmir'). To popularize the reformist cause, Yusuf Shah set up the first press in Kashmir, the Muslim Printing Press, launching two weeklies, al-Islam and Rahnuma, to publisize the views of the Deobandis and to combat what were seen as the un-Islamic practices of the Kashmiri Muslims. He also translated and published the first Kashmiri translation of and commentary on the Qur'an, so that ordinary Kashmiris could understand the Qur'an by themselves, rather than having to depend on the custodians of shrines for their religious instructions (Anjuman n.d.: 22-23). This new urban-centered Islamic reformism sought, thereby, to undermine the influence of the custodians of the shrines, many based in rural areas, as authoritative interpreters of the faith. It was in this context of growing Islamic reformism in Kashmir that the Ahi-i-Hadith took roots.

THE AHL-I-HADITH IN KASHMIR

In the early twentieth century, links with Muslim groups in other parts of India, notably Punjab, Delhi and Aligarh, brought a new breed of emerging and educated Kashmiri Muslims in touch with Islamic stirrings outside the state. This growing Islamic consciousness first manifested itself in the form of the Ahl-i Hadith, a Muslim reformist movement whose origins in South Asia go back to the late eighteenth century.[3] The Ahl-i Hadith saw the decline of the Muslims as a result of their having strayed from the path of the prophet and from strict monotheism (*tauhid*), and sought to purge Muslim society of what they saw as 'un-Islamic' accretions, most notably the 'blind following' (*taqlid*) of the four schools of jurisprudence (*mazahib*) and the beliefs and practices associated with Sufism. For the Ahl-i Hadith, any innovations from the path of the Prophet, as represented by the Qur'an and the records of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet (*hadith*) were condemned as un-Islamic. The Ahl-i Hadith did not emerge as a mass movement, however, for its fierce opposition to Sufism and the schools of jurisprudence earned it the wrath of the Sunni religious establishment. It did, however, manage to win a limited support among sections of the Muslim urban elite.

In Kashmir, the origins of the Ahl-i Hadith go back to the late nineteenth century, when a Kashmiri student of an Ahl-i Hadith *madrasa* in Delhi, Sayyed Hussain Shah Batkhu, returned to Srinagar and began a campaign against the 'unlawful' innovations which he saw his fellow Muslims wallowed in (Khan 2000: 133). As in India, the Ahl-i Hadith in Kashmir did not manage to secure a mass base, however, owing principally to fact that the Kashmiri Muslims were deeply rooted in their Sufi traditions. Khan, in his study of the history of Srinagar, writes that by the early 1920s, prior to the arrival of the Ahl-i Hadith, Sufi shrines, to be found in almost every street in the town, had emerged as 'the chief centres of superstition and charlatanism', controlled by 'crafty, hypocritical and materialist mullahs', who 'kept the common folk in the dark'. Priesthood, an institution foreign to pristine Islam, was deeply entrenched, with the custodians of the Sufi shrines emerging as 'an important exploiting agency in an organized manner'. For most Kashmiris, Islam seems to have been 'nothing more than the observance of a certain set of rituals'. Khan (1999: 109-112) sees the Ahl-i Hadith as the first organized effort in Kashmir to raise its voice against these 'superstitious practices' and to appeal to Muslims to reform their beliefs and customs in line with the *Shari 'ah.*

The early Alhi-i Hadith saw Kashmiri Muslim society as having strayed far from the path of the Prophet, indeed as hardly different from the 'polytheist' (*mushrik*) Hindu neighbours. As they understood it, the Kashmiris were still incomplete Muslims, for despite having formally accepted Islam; they continued to follow many un-Islamic practices. Thus, the official historian of the Kashmiri Ahl-i Hadith lamented, 'Idol-worship had been replaced by worship of the graves of Sufis, worship of the Hindu avatars by worship of the Sufis and Hindu Pandits by *dargah* custodians. While giving assent to the Islamic concept of strict monotheism, the Kashmiris continued in practice to worship beings other than Allah' (Muslim 1984:20). The belief that the Sufis could be beseeched to grant one's wishes or to intercede with God on their behalf and customs such as prostrating before the graves of the Sufis, reciting litanies in the mosques and shrines, celebrating the birth and death anniversaries of the Prophet and the saints, lighting lamps at shrines and even constructing tombs over graves, were all seen as tantamount to Shirk, the unforgivable crime of associating others with God. They were also condemned as bida 'a, wrongful innovations that had no sanction in the actual practice (sunat) of the Prophet, the punishment for which was burning in the fires of hell (Muslim 1984:20).

Such practices were seen as having resulted from the baneful influence of the Hindus rather than as a result of the gradual acculturation of Sufism in the area which had, in fact, enabled Islam to win great masses of converts among the Kashmiris. Hence, what had till then seemed for the Kashmiri Muslims to be an integral part of their understanding of Islam was clearly defined as 'Hindu' and thus condemned. Shared religious traditions and spaces where Hindus and Muslims joined together for common worship, such as the shrines of the saints, were seen as threatening the purity and integrity of the community, and hence to be vigorously opposed. The early activists of the Ahl-i Hadith insisted that Muslims should abandon all such 'Hindu' customs and live in line with their literalist understanding of the Shari 'ah. The Kashmiri Muslims were expected to model their lives as closely as they could on the lines of the Prophet and his Companions, for one's faith in Islam was to be the sole marker of identity for a Muslim. This had crucial consequences for Kashmiri activists in the Ahl-i Hadith came to understand their own selves, as Muslims plain and simple, for separate regional or national cultures and identities were seen as divisive, leading to the weakening of the worldwide Muslim *ummah*. The custodians of the shrines were accused of 'hiding the true message of Islam, just like the priests of the People of the Book [Jews and Christians] did', keeping the masses ignorant of the faith and inventing rituals and customs in order to make a living from the credulous as intermediaries between them and God, which had no sanction in Islam. They were bitterly condemned for having 'converted Islam into an industry, placing themselves as indispensable middlemen, and even going a far as declaring that they were able to rescind God's commandments as a sign of the great spiritual stature that they claimed for themselves' (Muslim 1984:87).

Not surprisingly, Batkhu and his small band of followers raised a storm of protest with their preaching, and were bitterly opposed by the custodians of the shrines, whom they condemned as 'Brahmins in Muslim guise', describing their opposition as motivated by the fear that it might threaten their power and privileges (Muslim 1984: 127). The custodians of some Sufi shrines of Srinagar complained to the Maharaja, warning him of the possibility of great violence and strife if Batkhu and his associates were not stopped from what they described as their attacks on Islam and the Sufis. Consequently, Batkhu was expelled from Srinagar, and took refuge in the town of Shopian, where, along with a fellow Ahl-i Hadith activist, Anwar Shah, he carried on his preaching , making a small number of followers in the town and in the neighbouring villages. Here, too, they had to suffer considerable opposition, accused of being 'irreligious' (*be din*) and 'deniers of the Sufis' (*munkar-i auliya*), and therefore, as apostates from Islam (Muslim 1984:100).

The official history of the Ahl-i Hadith in Kashmir, published in 1984, five years before the outbreak of a militant revolt in the area against Indian rule, is replete with references to bitter clashes between the Ahl-i Hadith and the followers of popular Sufism from the early years of the movement till the early 1980s. In this account, the state, which has now come to be seen as threateningly 'anti-Muslim', remains a silent spectator hovering in the background, a neutral, unobtrusive agency to which the Ahl-i Hadith and their opponents sometimes resort to their conflicts, such as over control of mosques or the freedom of Ahl-i Hadith followers to attend the Eidgah for Eid-Prayers, which the Hanafis refused, resolved. It is interesting to note that in this narrative no mention is made at all to opposition to or from the Hindus, and indeed it seems that for the Ahl-i Hadith at this time the Hindus did not seem to be of any immediate concern as a target of attack. Their major focus remained their fellow Sunni Muslims of Kashmir, whom they saw as having abandoned the true path. Although there are stray references to debates with the Ahmadis[4], in which the Ahl-i Hadith present themselves as true champions of Islam, there is no mention to similar combats with the Shi 'as, whom the Ahl-i Hadith saw as heretics. In other words, at this stage of the movement, the focus of attention of the Ahl-i Hadith seems to have been, overwhelmingly, the internal 'other'.

The official history of the Ahl-i Hadith in Kashmir refers to numerous cases of violent opposition by other Muslims to the Ahl-i Hadith for their attacks on Sufism. Thus, some Ahl-i Hadith activists are said to have been beaten up by other Muslims, driven out of their homes, subjected to social boycott, condemned as apostates, taken to court and refused entry into the mosques. Scores of *munazaras* or public religious debates were held between the two groups, all of which, or so this account tells us, resulted in the victory of the Ahl-i Hadith (Muslim 1984: 127-28). As a result of this virulent opposition to them, one of the first concerns of the Ahl-i Hadith in Kashmir was to build its own mosques, to begin with mainly in Srinagar, where its followers prayed in their own distinctive fashion behind their own imams, not only because the Hanafis refused to allow them inside their mosques but also because they believed that it was not allowed to pray behind an imam not of their own persuasion. In contrast to the Hanafi Muslims of the valley, they refused to chant the *Aurad-i-Fathiyya*, and, in addition, they performed their prayers in a distinctive fashion which they claimed was the true Prophetic practice, lifting their hands to their ears before each genuflection and reciting the word *amin* aloud, all of which set them clearly apart from the Hanafis. These external markers, along with the condemnation of Sufism, worked to build and consolidate a separate identity for the Ahl-i Hadith, who saw themselves as the only truly Muslim group. They defined themselves as *muwahidun* or 'monotheists', as 'upholders of the tauhid (monotheism) and the Prophetic *sunnat*', in contrast to the other Kashmiri Sunnits, whom they condemned as *ahl-i batil* ('the people of falsehood') and 'practitioners of *shirk* and *bida 'a*', Muslims only in name, and thus, for all practical purposes, polytheists (Muslim 1984: 107).

As for Sufism, the Ahl-i Hadith condemned it outright, not making a distinction between 'Islamic' and 'un-Islamic' varieties, arguing that neither the Prophet nor his companions were Sufis and the Sufism was a later development, an un-Islamic accretion that had no sanction whatsoever in Islam. It recognized the contributions of numerous Sufis the spread of Islam in Kashmir, but refused to recognize them as Sufis. Instead, they were presented as learned Muslims inspired by a sense of mission to spread the teachings of the Qur'an and the *sunnat.* Thus, for instance, in the official history of the Kashmiri Ahl-i Hadith, hazrat BulBul Shah, Hazrat Mir Sayyed 'Ali Hamadani, Hazrat Mir Muhammad hamdani and Nund Rishi find a brief mention, but are described simply as strict upholders of *tauhid* and the *Shar'ah*, no mention being made of their having been Sufis. A claim is made to inheriting the rightful legacy of Hazrat Mir Sayyed 'Ali Hamdani on the grounds that having been a Shafi'i, he must have followed the Prophetic practice of lifting his hands to his ears before each genuflection in the ritual prayer, a practice that — as mentioned above—set the Ahl-i Hadith apart from the Hanafis and was a matter of heated controversy between the two. The great Kashmiri Suhrawardi, Makhdum Sheikh Hamza, is depicted as 'constantly engaged in *Jihad* against the people of falsehood and the revilers of the Companions of the Prophet', the latter referring to the Shi'as, while no mention is made of him having been an accomplished mystic as well (Muslim 1984: 43-46).

The early converts to the Ahl-i Hadith seem to have been drawn principally from the ranks of the newly emerging Muslim middle class and trading families of the town of Kashmir, particularly Srinagar, Shopian and Anantnag (Islamabad). Few of them had access to modern western education. The official history of the Ahl-i Hadith mentions just two among the pioneers of the movement who had studied in a modern school, the Punjabi Sayyed Ramzan 'Ali (d. 1945), who rose to become the Superintendent of the Veterinary department in Srinagar, and Maulvi Muhammad Nuruddin, who had studied till the matriculation level. A minority were *madrasa* graduates, from Punjab or Delhi, while many had received and informal Islamic education from learned Muslim scholars in Kashmir itself. Several of them had studied under the Mirwa'iz family, who, although themselves Hanafis and associated with the Kubrawi Sufi *silsilah*, were vehement opponents of *bida'a* and *Shirk* and were among the pioneers of Islamic reformism in Kashmir. Some of these, such as Maulvi Ghulam Nabi Mubaraki, Hafiz Sayyed Ahd Shah Rifa'i and Maulvi Muhammad Nuruddin, went on to become teachers at the school set up by the Mirwa'iz, where they were influenced by the teachings of the Ahl-i Hadith, largely through personal networks. For others, travel to Punjab, to cities such as Amritsar and Sialkot, where the Ahl-i Hadith had a significant presence, or Delhi on trade or religious education provided their first contact with the Ahl-i Hadith and the new wave of Islamic reformism, which they brought back with them to Kashmir. A small number of activists came from established Sufi families with a large following, but chose to turn their backs on their ancestral profession. These included one Pir Muhammad Yahya of Acchakot, near Shopian, who is said to have participated in several polemical debates against the *ahl-i batil.* The most celebrated of them was Mirwa'iz Hasan (d. 1937), son of Mirwa'iz Rasul Shah, who came under the influence of Batkhu and joined the Ahl-i Hadith, renouncing his privileges as son of the Mirwa'iz, and then went on to play an important role in the subsequent spread of the movement. Some of the other pioneers of the Ahl-i Hadith were small traders, such as Muhammad shah Shadbaft and 'Abdul Aziz Chikan. Others were doctors of *unani* medicine or earned their livelihood through dispensing amulets, although, strictly speaking, this was frowned upon as'un-Islamic' by the Ahl-i Hadith. It is significant to note that none among these early leaders of the Ahl-i Hadith mentioned in the movement's official history were from among the peasantry, and only a few, such as Sabzar Shah, a street hawker, and Maulvi 'Abdul Rahman Nuri, the son of a poor, blind recite of the Qur'an, belonged to the urban working classes (Muslim 1984: 264-84.)

For these largely urban, lower middle class activists of the Ahl-i Hadith in the first four decades of the twentieth century, the movement promised them religious authenticity and a sense of empowerment against the families which controlled the shrines and the lives of many Kashmiri Muslims. It provided them with a sense of mission, of being a religious elite as 'true' Muslims, which set them apart from the Hanafis, whom they saw as wallowing in superstition and corrupt practices. These were young men, typically from lower-middle class families in towns, disillusioned with what they saw as the 'un-Islamic' popular Sufism of the shrines and the authority of the custodians of the shrines, seeking a more egalitarian form of Islamic expression that would satisfy their need for religious purity, while at the same time answering their need for political assertion and community activism they saw popular Sufism as having not only diluted the faith of the Muslims but also enervated them, making them indifferent to their worldly woes and thus an easy target for others. Growing education also made for growing awareness of what was seen as the oppression of the Muslim community at the hands of the Dogras, as well as of the Kashmiri Pandits, who were viewed as the local agents of the Dogra regime. Association with the movement enabled them to establish links with a pan-Indian Muslim constituency, and numerous Ahl-i Hadith leaders, particularly from Punjab, made frequent tours of the valley. This sense of bonding and the consciousness of representing the true faith must have been a powerful psychological asset in a context where the small, yet gradually expanding, urban Muslim middle class was subject to fierce repression by the 'Hindu' Dogra state and its local representatives, the Kashmiri Pandits.

THE JAMA 'AT-I-ISLAMIC IN KASHMIR

The opposition to popular Sufism launched by the Ahl-i Hadith in Kashmir was carried further by the Jama'at-i-Islami, founded in 1941 by the Islamist ideologue Sayyed Abul A'la Maududi. Like the Ahl-i Hadith, the Jama'at, too, insisted that Muslims should closely abide by the Qur'an and the *sunnat* of the Prophet, but, unlike the Ahl-i Hadith, it did not condemn the schools of jurisprudence, although it insisted that Muslims need not be bound by the precedents of the medieval jurisprudents and could exercise their independent judgment (ijtihad) in accordance with the Qur'an and the Hadith in order to apply Islam to matters on which the scriptural corpus was silent. For the Jama'at, Islam was an all-embracing worldview that governed every aspect of the believer's personal as well as social life. The establishment of an Islamic state ruled in accordance with the Shari 'ah, was seen as central to the Islamic mission. Hence, the Jama'at believed that Islam could not be divorced from politics, and that all Muslims must struggle for the Islamic state. Unlike the Ahl-i Hadith, the Jama'at was not opposed to Sufism as such, but only to what it found as 'un-Islamic' elements in popular Sufism. Hence, its approach to Sufism was far less virulent and much more accommodative than that of the Ahl-i Hadith, which explains, in part, why it was able to establish itself more firmly in Kashmir than the latter (Sikand 2002).

Several of the leading members of the Jama'at in Kashmir seem to have come from established Sufi families. One of these activists, who was to lead the organization as its first *amir* for many years, was Sa'aduddin Tarabali. He was born in a family with long Sufi connections, linked with the renowned Sufi, Ahmad Sahib Tarabali of Srinagar (Kashmiri n.d: 277) after his graduation, he taught for a while as a teacher at the Mirwa'iz's Islamiya High School in Srinagar and later, was appointed as head master of the government school at Chrar. Here, he began introducing Maududi's writings to a number of young Kashmiris. Form Chrar, he was shifted to the government school at Shopian, where he taught science for a year. In Shopian, then a hub of Kashmiri politics, Sa'aduddin managed to bring many young Kashmiri men under his influence. One of the most prominent of these was Maulvi Ghulam Ahmad Ahrar, an active member of the Majlis-i Ahrar, an anti-imperialist Islamic reformist group founded in Lahore, who was to go on to play an important role in the later spread of the Jama'at in Kashmir (Kashmiri n.d.: 293). Like Sa'aduddin, Maulvi Ahrar also belonged to a family known for its Sufi connections. He received a traditional Islamic education, first at a seminary in Lahore, and then at the Madrasa Nusrat Ul-Hasan at Amritsar. Another of the early activists of the movement in Kashmir was Hakim Ghulam Nabi of Pulwama. He, too, was born in a Pir family. He received his early education in Delhi and then went to the famous reformist Islamic seminary at Deoband, the Dar ul-'Ulum, where he enrolled for the *Maulvi fazil* course. He later trained in Unani medicine. He was known for his good knowledge of Arabic, Urdu and English, and was also a prolific writer. Under Maulvi Ahrar's influence, he got involved with the Jama'at, and later rose to the positions of deputy *amir* and secretary-general of the organisation (Kashmiri 1984: 26-27). Qari Saifuddin, who served for many years as the *amir* of the Jama'at, was himself a practicing *Pir.*

A common thread seems to run through the biographies of most of the early activists of the Jama'at, who later went on to become leaders of the movement. They all seem to have belonged to middle-class families, many with Sufi or Pir backgrounds. Their standing as members of Pir families gave them a position of leadership and authority within their own local communities, in which the Pirs and their descendants were traditionally looked upon with considerable respect and reverence. Many of them had received a traditional Islamic education outside Kashmir, in places in Punjab, the United Provinces and Delhi, which introduced them at a young age to the new winds of Islamic reformism. Clearly, like the pioneers of the Ahl-i Hadith, being exposed to these new trends, they were increasingly dissatisfied with the existing conditions of religious belief and practice in Kashmir, where Sufism, the dominant form of Islam, had degenerated, as they saw it, into rituals and 'un-Islamic' beliefs associated with the cults of the saints. Their commitment to a sort of Islam that condemned these cults can be read as a revolt against their own family traditions, seeing these, in some way, as responsible for Muslim Marginalisation and powerlessness. Their quest for a more socially and politically involved and activist Islam can be seen as part of the larger Kashmiri Muslim middle class-led struggle against, first, the Dogras and then, after 1947, Indian rule. Islam, for them, was a call for political assertion in a context of perceived Muslim powerlessness, as well as a call for personal piety and dedication to God's Will.

Unlike the Ahl-i Hadith, however, the Jama'at sought to steered clear from entering into open confrontation with the defenders of the cult centered on the shrines of the saints. Its approach in 'nullifying *shrik* and advocating *tauhid*', notes a sympathetic observer, was 'one of tactical compromise' (Bisati 1997:40). It refrained from openly condemning popular Sufism as 'un-Islamic', although this was implicit in the way that it understood Islam. Instead of directly attacking Sufism, the early ideologues of the Jama'at in Kashmir attempted to present a form of Sufism that they saw in accordance with the *Shari'ah* and, above all, as a means for 'Islamic Revolution', to bring state and society under the laws of the *Shari'ah*. Thus, for instance, in late 1945, addressing the first large, organized rally of the Jama'at in Srinagar, the Jama'at's *amir*, Sa'aduddin, declared that the Jama'at's message was not a new one, but, rather, a revival of the otiginal mission of Hazrat Mir Sayyed 'Ali Hamdani, which had aimed at rescuing the Kashmiris from *shirk* and *bida'a*, and to usher in an 'Islamic Revolution', for he had taught that Islam was not to be restricted to Just 'a few, limited rituals' (Kashmiri 1984: 35-36). Thus, the image of the Sufis of Kashmir, with whom the general populace still closely identified, were sought to be subtly transformed, from world renouncing mystics into ardent activists of the 'Islamic Revolution' and brave crusaders of true monotheism. The Jama'at's official organ *Azan* regularly brought out special issues on various Sufi saints of Kashmir who had played an important role in the spread of Islam in the region. Qari Saifuddin, later amir of the Jama'at and himself chairman of the famous Sufi shrine at khanyar, Srinagar, translated the sayings of Hazrat Nuruddin Nurani from Kashmiri into Urdu, presenting him as a staunch proponent of the Shari'ah (Kashmiri 1984:39). Hazrat Nuruddin Nurani was described as having firmly 'renounced un-Islamic Rishism and starting a new period of Islamic Rishism' (Kashmiri n.:d.:79).

Likewise, Sa'aduddin translated Hazrat Mir Sayyed 'Ali Hamadani's Persian ***Aurad-i Fatahiyya*** into Urdu, and penned numerous tracts, attempting to re-interpret Sufi practices and concepts in a manner that reflected the Jama'at's concern with proper observance of the *Shari'ah*. In a pamphlet on Sufi litanies, he critiqued the empty ritualism that had become associated with their performance, arguing that the recitation of the litanies needed to be 'accompanied by deep thinking', which, in turn, would 'change our conditions swiftly from bad to good'. This, however, he added, 'needs the understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith'. Reciting litanies in praise of God must also be accompanied by action aimed at implementing God's Will on earth, including the struggle to establish a truly Islamic social order (Sa'aduddin [a], n.d.: 7). In another pamphlet, Sa'aduddin sharply rebuked those who simply chanted the litany *Allah-o-Akbar* ('God is Great'), without acting upon 'the responsibility that the command lays on them'. God's greatness means that His Will alone should be obeyed 'in every branch of our life', and this, in turn, demands that the society and the state should be patterned on God's law, the *Shari'ah* (Sa'aduddin [b], n.d.: 2-6).

The Jama'at's attitude to the cults of the Sufi shrines, although certainly moderate as compared to the Ahl-i Hadith, did not seem to have made for its popular acceptance. While sections of the Kashmiri Muslim middle class could readily identify with the Jama'at's message of reform, tied in as it was with an activist spirit for political assertion, it proved incapable of reaching out to vast numbers of ordinary Kashmiris, in whose lives the cults centered on the shrines of the saints continued to play a pivotal role. Charges of being 'anti Sufi' and a hidden '*Wahhabi plot*' were not easily rebutted. Despite its gradual growth from the 1950s onwards, the Jama'at had to contend with considerable resistance from several quarters within the Kashmiri Muslim community. Many Muslims associated with the popular Sufi tradition saw it as part of a wider '*Wahhabi*'[5] nexus along with the Ahl-i Hadith. Its message of Islamic reform, with its insistence that Muslims should go directly to the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet for guidance, by-passing the authority of the Sufi saints and denying the intermediary powers that were attributed to them, was seen as an attack on cherished beliefs by practitioners of the cults that had developed around the graves of the Sufis. It was also felt to be a threat to the authority of the custodians of the shrines, the class of Pirs, who commanded great respect among the ordinary folk. Allegations were levelled against the Jama'at by what it called 'monopolists of religion', of promoting 'wrong beliefs' (*bad ayteqadi*) and of 'denying the Sufis' (*auliya-i Allah ke munkar*) (Kashmiri 1984:78).

Opposition from these quarters to the Jama'at was reported from many places. Thus, in August 1957, local Muslims protested against a Jama'at rally at the village of Dengi Vich in Baramulla, at which Sa'aduddin was present. Sa 'aduddin tried to reason with the protesters, saying,

> We are your brothers. We believe in Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter, and we only talk about these matters with the people [...] you must understand that the communists[6] might soon come here, and here, and they do not believe in Allah, His Prophet, the Qur'an and the Hereafter. Your *Maulvis* will probably themselves welcome them with garlands of flowers (Kashmiri 1984:91-92).

Interestingly, the Ahl-i Hadith, which shared a common legacy of *Shari 'ah*-centred Islamic reform with the Jama 'at, but which competed with it for much the same potential support base, did not spare the Jama'at from attack, probably fearing, like the custodians of the Sufi shrines, that the Jama'at was succeeding in winning over a number of its own potential supporters. For instance, in December 1952 local Ahl-i Hadith activists in Shopian started a virulent campaign against the Jama'at, telling the people that,

> The Maududi *Jama'at* have adopted the appearance of Muslims but, in actual fact, they are so far from Islam that the prayers said behind an imam who belongs to that sect are unacceptable [to God] [...] In short, they are even worse than the Mirza'is[7], Qadianis and Baha'is[8], and so they should be completely avoided (Kashmiri 1984:84-85).

The Jama'at, however, responded to these allegations with tact. It saw many of its critics as simply motivated by a threat to their own interests because of its increasing influence. Qari Saifuddin noted that some 'selfish *mullahs*, for whom religion is a means for livelihood' were opposing the party for their own petty reasons. The Jama'at's political opponents were branding it as anti-Sufi, he said, simply in order to malign its image, fearful of its growing popularity.

Despite their opposition to popular Sufism, both the Jama'at as well as the Ahl-i Hadith seemed to have recognised its potential as a resource for political mobilization. This was most clearly illustrated in the controversial affair of a sacred relic, the hair said to be of the Prophet Muhammad (*mo-i Maqadas*), housed at the shrine at Hazratbal, Srinagar, which suddenly disappeared from its repository in late December 1963. The relic was an object of deep reverence and devotion among the Kashmiri Muslims, a tangible connection between them and the Prophet. Although reverence of relics was looked upon as 'un-Islamic' by both the Ahl-i Hadith and the Jama'at, they swiftly responded to the mass movement that erupted in the wake of its disappearance. Soon the agitation for the recovery of the relic developed into a popular upsurge for political self-determination for the people of the state. Muslim religious groups, including both the Ahl-i Hadith and the Jama'at, were among the most active in leading the agitation. 'The incident of the missing relic', says Maheshwari, 'brought back the Mullahs, after about five decades, to the centre-stage of politics' (Maheshwari 1993:4). Several people were killed in police firing. Kashmiri political leaders set up the Awami Action Committee to carry on the struggle and to put forward their demands, in which the Jama'at was represented by Qari Saiuddin, and the Ahl-i Hadith by its leader Maulvi Muhammad Nuruddin, who served as the president of the Committee for a while. Spearheading the agitation for the recovery of the holy relic, and linking it to a broader struggle for political self-determination, senior Jama'at and Ahl-i Hadith leaders, among others, toured the Kashmir valley to mobilize public support, demanding that the matter of the missing relic be urgently taken up in the UN Security Council and that the UN dispatch a team to investigate the whole affair and to pressurize India to abide by its promises of allowing the Kashmiris to determine their own political future. In this way, although opposed in principle to the popular Sufism, both the Ahl-i Hadith and the Jama'at showed themselves quite willing to selectively draw upon it for enhancing their popularity and political interests.

CONCLUSION

All over the Muslim world, from the late nineteenth century onwards, popular Sufism has come under critique from Muslim reformers. In Kashmir, as elsewhere in South Asia, a new breed of Muslim social and religious activists came increasingly to see key aspects of popular Sufism as deviant, 'un-Islamic' and 'Hinduistic', although, as we have seen, it was precisely by adapting their message to the cultural world of the Kashmiris and promoting a unique Kashmiri 'syncretistic' tradition that Islam had been able to make vast numbers of converts in the area (Roy 1998:33)[9]. Many practices and beliefs on which the popular Kashmiri Sufi tradition was based were condemned as having no sanction in Islam, which came to be seen as synonymous with the scripturalist tradition based on the Qur'an and the Prophetic *sunnat*, sometimes interpreted in a literalist sense. These 'un-Islamic' practices associated with the popular tradition were depicted as having been devised by a class of religious intermediaries for their own monetary benefit. The very notion of intercession, the belief in the powers of the Sufis or the custodians of their shrines to mediate between the individual believer and God, was rejected as akin to polytheism. In its place a direct, unmediated relationship was to be established with God, and the individual could dispense with the Sufis and the shrine custodians as religious authorities. A true Muslim, it was stressed, need only look to the Qur'an and the *sunnat* of the Prophet in order to lead a truly Islamic life. In this way, religious authority was made more diffused and broad-based, and now made accessible to 'ordinary' Muslim with a proper understanding of the scripturalist tradition. This more individual-centred understanding of Islam exercised a particular appeal to the slowly emerging urban Muslim middle class in Kashmir.

For many members of this class, the popular Sufi tradition was seen as world denying, as unconcerned with the lived realities of the Muslims. Not only was this considered as 'un-Islamic', for, they argued, the Qur'an was fiercely opposed to monasticism (*rahbaniyat*), it also had left the Muslims weak and helpless, at the mercy of other communities. In contrast, for instance, the more activist, socially-engaged Islam that the Jama'at sought to present, such as through its network of schools and clinics and its political involvement, affirmed the need for the Muslims to understand Islam as a system (*Nizam*) that covered all aspects of a Muslim's life.[10] A Muslim was to actively struggle to establish Islam in its entirety, instead of hoping for a miracle to be performed by a deceased Sufi to out an end to his or her woes. This more this-worldly understanding of Islam thus readily appealed to many Kashmiris disillusioned with the custodians of the shrines for their seeming unconcern for the actual conditions of the Muslims, which went hand in hand with a growing involvement of in political struggle against Dogra autocracy form the early years of the twentieth century on wards and then in the changed circumstances after 1947.

The Ahl-i Hadith and the Jama'at-i Islami critique of the popular Kashmir Sufi traditions have important implications for the notion of 'Kashmiriyat', questioning some of its basic assumptions. Clearly, in the way the notion is often explained or defended, it is somewhat limited, not least in its tendency to take a static and somewhat romanticised picture of the popular Sufi traditions on which it draws upon so heavily. But this paper has told just one side of a very complex story. Just as popular Kashmiri Muslim religious traditions have been increasingly contested and critiqued internally from the nineteenth century onwards, so, too, have the specific Kashmiri Pundit religious tradition, with the intrusion of conservative Hindu organizations, some of which related to Muslims in negative terms. These processes of change within popular Kashmiri religious traditions, Muslim, Hindu, or 'liminal' or 'shared', thus clearly pose major questions that have not been given adequate attention in discussions about what is admittedly the debatable and furiously debated notion of 'Kashmiriyat'.

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Kashmiryat .... Philosophical aspect of Sufi Poetry

Manzoor Fazili

The story of modern philosophy is a story of successive changes in the framework of knowledge from ancient to the present times. In the ancient and the medieval times philosophy in both the West and the East had a coherent and rigorous system. In the West rebellion against the medieval thought is regarded by some philosophers as a process of decline, which may be true even in Kashmir. Many think that medieval philosophy was victim of stagnation and idolatry of an ecclesiastical system. The present day philosopher, however, exaggerates the importance of contemporary theories. Skepticism plays a large role in the philosophy of today.

In Kashmir, the same story of philosophy is repeated as we witness in the medieval Europe, may be with a difference on account of varied cultural ethos. In ancient Kashmir two philosophical transformations occurred. In the third century BCE when Buddhist influence overpowered our cultural substance, it established an egalitarian social order. The Vedic Brahmanism could not stand the onslaught of the Buddhist hegemony. The evolution of new religious philosophy, in Kashmir during the centuries following the one, when Nagarjuna flourished, came into existence. It is the glorious outcome of the fusion of the ancient Vedic and the Buddhist cultures. The indigenous system of philosophy is markedly different from other known systems of philosophies in India or in the West. It is called, as all of us know, Kashmir Saivism, which is totally different from South Indian Shavism or what is called Trika Shastra. It is a philosophy to the three vital matters of the greatest importance namely (a) man (b) his universe and (c) Fundamental principal which keeps on restoring order, equilibrium and harmony in the Universe where it is disturbed and disrupted by constant change. Trika is intersested in man and his personality. Its final goal is freedom. This goal is ultimate reality. Siva, the lord is another name for freedom. Ultimate reality is Siva who is Infinite consciousness. He is omnipresent, eternality and formlessness. Trika describes consciousness of man as the Atman, the core one which is the eternal and one witness of all that is undergoing ceaseless change namely the body, mind and spirit composed of thoughts, feelings and emotions which are subject to growth and decay. In this philosophy the word for change is "Speeding".

In Saivism, there is second to none to Lord Siva. Of the Indian philsosophies it is the Sankhya system of Kapila which has analyzed man's personality in detail and discovered 25 elements composing it. The Trika has gone deeper and found no less than 36 principles. It describes man's physical, psychic, psychological, spiritual and mental personality. Trika teaches the exact methods of knowing these constituents. It is believed that the Trika Shastra is the syntheses of the essential things that are to be found in almost all the Indian Philosophies plus the knowledge gained by the Kashmiri thinkers with their own observations and experience. This Trika sastra has the following characteristics:

1) Synthesis of all that is abiding, universal and enduring in Vedanta, the Sankhya, the Vaisheshika, the Nyaya and the Vinaya of Buddha.
2) Siva is the subject as well as the object, the experience as the object, the experiences as well as the experienced.
3) In Saivism beauty is another name for morally good.
4) Love truth and beauty are different names of one and the same thing.
5) It is absolute monism.
6) Souls of the same nature is consciousness, there is no difference between the individual soul and the universal soul.

By 14th century, however the system of philosophy in Kashmir had a drastic change. The change from one ecclesiastical system to another was most significant change. The adoption of Islam by the great mass of the population which became accomplished fact during the half of the 14th century but which had already started towards the close of Hindu rule. However, according to Stein, it did neither affect the independence of the country nor had any material change in its political and cultural conditions. The administration remained as before in the hands of traditional official class, the Brahmans whether he converted to Islam or remained a Brahman.

According to Stein the change of religion had presented no advantage to the official class because they retained their inherited status, together with its literary tradition.

The conversion of the people of Kashmir to Islam was encouraged by the arrival of Sayids from Persia. Prominent among them is their leader or Amir known as Shah-i-Hamadan. His name also is associated with Amir-i-kabir or the great Amir or Ali-i-Sani or the second Ali. He had seven hundred Sayyids that accompanied him to Kashmir for propagating Islam. According to G.M.D. Sufi, Shah-i-Hamadan had studied Islamic theology, acquired knowledge and learnt Tasawwuf or the mysticism of the sufi's under the tuition of Sayyid Ala-ud-din Simnani, who happened to be his maternal uncle. He journeyed about 21 years through out the world and finally returned to his native place. It was after his return that the rise of Timur forced him to leave for Kashmir. He arrived in the valley in the reign of Sultan Shahibuddin 1372 A.C. He visited Kashmir three times and the last visit of Shah-i-Hamdan took place in 1383 A.C, leaving Kashmir on account of his ill health. He and his troupe thus brought to Kashmir mystic Islam. Thus he sings in "Chahil-Assrar" or forty secrets:

Were my beloved to unveil His beauty,
the world hide its face under the blanket of humiliation.

&

Love always flies higher and higher and
we always live under the radiance of its shadow.

&

And he, who is not form in thy path,
loses track of the mystery of his origin.

The following are the characteristics of the Islamic Sufism:

1. Those who believe, Love Allah profusely (*Quran*).
2. "O prophet, tell them if you love Allah, follow Him in all actions, Allah will love you".
3. Allah admires those who help the poor and destitute out of love purely for Allah.
4. "Soon will Allah produce a people whom he will love and who will Love Him.

Love in the sayings of prophet (SAW).

i) He who has no love has no faith.

ii) Allah said I was a hidden treasure; I loved to be known so I created the universe.

iii) Allah created man in His image.

Says Maulana Jalal-ud-din Rumi (RA) in his world famous Mathnavi:

i) "hail to thee than O love, sweet madness
Love exalts on earthly bodies to heaven and makes,

The very hills (men) to dance with joy".

Sufism is defined as the rudiments of spiritual course and the final goal. What is claimed to be direct or unmediated experience of the divine, in which the human soul momentarily approaches union with God. Many of the Sufi's have stressed that this is not primarily or essentially a matter of vision or ecstasies, as is sometimes supposed but of total submission of the human will and intellect to God. The Sufi poetry is the manifestation of the Love direct and unmediated experience of the Divine. It makes the poet to transform its soul to approach a union with God.

Thus Islam to the people of Kashmir in the 14th century remained not only under the influence of Sufi Islam but was introduced to the people as Islam itself. The people did not care what the rulers committed in the sphere of politics. The common man under this new ecclesiastical change in philosophy did not bother about ethnic, sectional or parochial differences. They simply strengthened the basis of religious humanism which is the essence of Islamic Sufism. Through out the length and breadth of the valley scores of Hindu and Muslim saints appeared who preached the cult of religious humanism. It was according to P.N. Bazaz, intellectual foundations on which Kashmir nationalism had been reared. Kah Nov, Min Shah, Bata Mol, Zain Shah, Shukar Shah and Resh Mol are some of the distinguished among these missionaries of the humanist faith. The humanist faith turned to be the basis of peace in Kashmir. The cult of Buddha in the 3rd century BCE nearly seven hundred years, the teaching of Vedanta, as explained earlier,the mysticism of Islam in 14th century and their blend thereof, found congenial home for Sufism in the land. Kashmir thus converted from the land of Parvati to the land of peers, Reshis, and Babas. It is believed that it is this period of our history which has given us the finest Sufi poetry in particular, from Lalla and Sheikh Noor-ud-din Wali (RA) and others down to Zaeefa of the 20th century.

However, the humanist philosophy ingrained in Sufi poetry is to be employed in contrast to one opposing term known as "absolutism" in which human values are presumably less central. The doctrine of Protagoras taking men as measure, stand in contrast to various types of absolutism, especially of an epistemological nature. In the Renaissance the term signified a return to Greek sources and individual criticism and interpretation in contrast to the tradition of scholasticism and religious authority. In most recent centuries the term has been often used in contrast to theism, locating in man the source of goodness and creativity. August Comte is an extreme example of his usage having formulized ecclesiastical framework for the "Worship of humanity".

In Kashmir, the religious humanism as the cult of Sufis no doubt is against absolutism but unlike renaissance humanism is not return to Greek source or classics and interpretation in contrast to the tradition of scholasticism and religious authority but is referred to as the return to Persian sources.

Thus the philosophical aspect of our Sufi poetry is neither escapism nor the isolation of the Peer, Reshi and the Baba but love or in the Kashmiri language "Loll, the most cherished term, possibly unknown to human history of literature. The first votary and apostle of the religious humanism is the philosophy of "Loll" given by the hermitess Lalla, who refused to conform to the established traditions, dogmas and rituals of Brahmanism. It is believed that on the arrival of Shah-i-Hamdan in Kashmir Lalla met him and had prolonged discussion with him on philosophy, religion and spiritualism. This proved to be turning point in her life. According to some scholars having assimilated the basic teachings of both Saivism and Islam, Lalla become the harbinger of the resurgence movement in Kashmir. Both the Hindus and Muslims acclaimed her as their spiritual preceptor and their friend, philosopher and guide. Like Buddha, Lalla preached her doctrine in the common man's language and through her vakhs she preached the philosophy of "Loll" or incarnate love. The philosophy of Lalla preached, self denial, purity of life, renunciation and non-attachment to worldly life. She sang:

The holy books disappearing,
the mystic formula remains,

the mystic formula vanishing,
Mind alone is left,
The void (the apparent) merges into the void (the transcendent).
And
The same stone is in the road and in the pedestal,
The same stone is the sacred place: the same stone is the turning mill,
Siva is difficult to attain, take a hint of guidance. (from thy Guru).

In the galaxy of our Sufi poets, from Lalla of the 1st half of the 14th century (Born in 1335) to that of Zaeefa of the 20th century, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Wali RA Shines as a Sufi poet of excellence. He loved quiet solitude and remained absorbed in deep contemplation for hours. He was in desperate search for a solution of the eternal problem of existence. To all his relatives, friends and neighbours his behavior appeared strange but unmindful of all this, he continued his struggle to know the riddles of life. While he was undergoing the terrible mental and spiritual turmoil, he sought the guidance of Lalla. Thus his saintly life's turn him to be a mystic poet singing the same philosophy which dominated nearly six centuries of our history. He was more vocal regarding the philosophy of love or Loll. He sang:

The love is he who burns with love,
Whose self doth shine like gold,
When man's heart lights up with aflame of love,
Then shall he reach the Infinite.
And
Love is death of an only son to a mother,
Can the lover have ant sleep?
Love is venomous stings of a swarm of wasps,
Can the lover have any rest?
Love is a rope dripping with blood,
Can the wearer even utter a sigh?

Soon after the death of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Wali (RA) his favouite disciples founded a religious order known as Reshis and Babas. They along with Sufi poets continued the philosophy of love that their preceptors had advocated. Habibullah Nowshari, representing 16th century, yet continues to eulogize the philosophy of Loll in the following manner:

His body is marooned coloured like peach flowers,
Need not tell him, it shall be talk of the world.
Mystics and lovers took hide in Jungles,
Mansoor knew, that body was to burn.
I am the truth, he spoke everywhere,
Need not tell him, it shall be talk of the world.

Momin, in his "Loll" of the highest order representing the 18th century sings:

O! In search of the Lord,
What you perceive and what you receive.
O! Lover of the love,
What you perceive what you get.
Enter the inner self from outer,
You shall fell elevated.
You shall see thy Lord.

In the pure Islamic Sufi cult Shucha Kral turns to be a preacher or "*Waiz*" in the poem "*Amre-Khuda Maentoo*" or obey God's command:

Treat yourself mortal,
Obey command of God,
Awake at the Morning Prayer,
Leave business at the known prayers,
Afternoon prayers is the voice of the liver,
Obey command of God
Evening prayers are time sensitive,
Go on praying,
Continue with late evening prayers.
OR
Candle stand and the candle,
Butterfly's loving rounds,
Both burn what remains?
The total achievement is agony of love.
OR

The rivulet is settled in the river,
Boat on the water, water under boat.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the influence of Islamic Sufism continued with Shah Ghafoor singing:

Be aware my friend, involvement in love,
This love I shall not abandon,
The wind of love carriers me far,
The love I shall not abandon
And
You are portentous, am void,
What far I lost my comfort.
You are powerful, I am non sensitive,
What far I lost my comfort.
That fire so fierce,
That fire burnt my heart.
Neither it has smoke nor flame,
What far I lost my comfort.

Poet's in general but Sufi poets in particular possess original model of something from which others are copied. According to Dr. Jung, it is called archetypes which are common mental pictures, all people inherit from birth and which appear frequently in art and literature. It is therefore not strange to find Vedantic or Trika Shastras or Islamic values in our Sufi poetry. For example examine the following poems of Shamsfakir of the 19th century:

"Harmukh wuch Deedar" i.e observe at the mountain Harmukh.
"Harmukh Sue Nun Draw" i.e he manifests Himself on the mountain.

The mountain Harmukh is associated with the Lord Siva and it is known as "Diadem of Siva". In his poem "*Rinda Sapdukh Zinde*" the poet starts with the word Allah where as the poem "*Zan Melanav Bhagvanis Saef*" he associates himself with Bhagvan the incorporeal God for Hindus. He says in the poem:

O! knowledgeable, know Purnas and meditation,
Know thy Lord Bhagwan,
Must pray in the shop of deeds,

Shastras of Dharm and its statues,
Lalla combined her soul and the skies,
Know thy Lord Bhagwan.

These examples are sufficient proof to decide that we inherit many philosophies. Our culture is almost synthesis of most of the Indian philosophies and that of Muslim or Islamic Sufistic philosophy. The picture of the unity of India from times memorial is brought by the cultural fabric of ancient Kashmir. Despite Kashmiris geographical isolation, we find that this small land playing the role in enriching the cultural life of entire subcontinent of India. Asoka who brought the valley under his empire got Buddhist to preach the doctrine of Buddha. It had profound effect on our cultural life. Secondly the Sanskrit language was the cause of unity of India during that time. The fact is that all the literature produced in Kashmir on Buddhism was in Sanskrit. We have enormous contribution of Kashmir to Sanskrit poetry, drama, philosophy and literature in general. In philosophy and esthetics Kashmir made notable contribution to the Indian civilization.

Thus the conflict between reactionar Brahmanism and orthodox Islam on the one side and doubts of the progressive but critical Shaivites on the other, was resolved by the evolution of religious humanism, which is the theme of entire Sufi poetry. The disintegration, anarchy and restlessness came to an end and Kashmir entered the era of peace and progress, after the adoption of Islam.

Although Lalla and others down to Zaeefa regarded the world mostly an illusion and longed for freedom from the desire of existence, yet there is evidence that it did not mean absolute escapism. There is evidence of Sayyid Ali Shah Hamdani's influence on Lalla, when she confesses that it is not necessary for a person to become hermit in order to achieve the absorption of the individual self into the universal self but even a house holder can absorption of the individual self into the universal self but even a house holder can obtain ultimate releases provided he or she performs his or her religious and secular duties without any thought of gain or profit. Thus form the 14th century onwards the dominant note in Kashmir's cultural philosophy and Sufi poetry is "Loll".

From Regional identity to Universal Consciousness: The Case of Abhinavagupta

Bettina Baumer

When the question about the contribution of Shaivism to Kashmir is raised, it can also be turned around to ask about the contribution of Kashmir to Shaivism. This is a vast topic which a number of scholars are dealing with.[1] But whatever approach one may take, it is undeniable that one of the greatest contributions of Kashmir, not only to Shaivism, not only to India, but to the world, is Abhinavagupta, great philosopher, mystic, aesthetician, poetician, of the 10th-11th century.

At the end of his magnum opus *Tantraloka* Abhinavagupta pays an enchanting homage to Kashmir, not only as a land of Knowledge and sanctity, as Saradapitha, seat of the goddess of learning, but even describing its natural and sensual charm. Although his ancestors came to Kashmir from Antarvedi, the middle land between the rivers Ganga and Yamuna, he feels a deep attachment to the land where his forefathers settled and where he attained whatever a human being can attain.

But his philosophy of Trika and Pratyabhijna being based on the universality of Consciousness *(samvit, cit)*, the question may be asked how does he reconcile his attachment to a particular place in the universe and in the (sub) continent called Kanya or Kumarika in the ancient cosmography, with the all-pervasing presence of Divine Consciousness, independent of space, time, causation and form. This question implies the role of "sacred geography" in non-dualistic Kashmir Shaivism, which is dealt with exhaustively in the chapter on "the way of Space" (*desadhvan*) in the same *Tantraloka* (ch. VIII).

Abhinavagupta starts his concluding verses of the Tantraloka with a cosmic vision of the whole universe consisting of 36 levels of reality (*tattvas*) and an endless number of worlds (*bhuvana*, in fact there are 118 worlds according to the *Saivagamas*) – in a sense anticipating the modern scientific view of an expanding universe:

> By the force of the 36 principles/ levels of reality an endless series of universes has been created, but (among them) the exceedingly beautiful one is *brahmanda* – for there is no sense of beauty without manifoldness[2].
> TA XXXVII.[33]

He comes down to describing the seven worlds *(pura)*, and then to the various continents and islands *(dvipa)*, of which the (sub) continent called Kumarika is the foremost.. The reason given is interesting: It is here

> Where the sages have the capacity to ascend from the lower stages to the highest goal, which is Siva. (v.35)

He then proceeds to defining the best country in the foremost continent:

> The best and most praiseworthy country in (the continent) Kanya is where the most excellent scriptures are found. (v.37)

And here comes the well-known statement that the "middle land" (madhyadesa, central India or Antarvedi) is the seat of all the scriptures (Sastra). It is here where Abhinavagupta's ancestor Atrigupta was born "who had devoured the ocean of Sastras" (v.38).

The king Lalitaditya who got to know about his qualities and vast knowledge brought him to Kashmir, "at the high place of the Himalayas" *(Kasmirakhyam himalayamurdhagam)*, presided over by Siva and protected by his attendants, Vijaya and others (v.39).

The most outstanding feature of this blessed country is that:

> Here at many places sages (muni) have made their dwelling, and at every step Siva himself is presiding. I believe (says Abhinavagupta) that for attaining any desired accomplishment (spiritual power, siddhi) there is no other place but Kashmir to reach a state of fullness. (v.40)

There the goddess of wisdom, Sarada herself is present, but it is also place of love, passion and beauty, incited by wine (madya). This wine not only incites the passion of love, but it is also instrumental in awakening the circle of divinities in the body (*devatacakra*), and in bestowing both, enjoyment and liberation (bhogapavarga, v.44). This is significant because it shows the connection between the sensual and the spiritual in the Tantric traditions, enhanced by the natural beauty of Kashmir and its people. Abhinavaguapta does not fail to describe the richness of the country in saffron (v.45). More than that, Kashmir is the land:

> Where every person is a poet, wise, brave and loquacious, where the women are graceful and radiant like the moonlight, and where the group of yoginis reside, who are pure like ether, having unfolded the infinite path of susumna by absorbing the sun and the moon (prana and apana). (v. 46)

The importance given to the yoginis throws light on a continuous, though often hidden tradition, of which Lal Ded (Lallesvari) at a later time is a glorious example. The status of being a yogini is attained by the awakening of the kundalini hinted at.

Abhinavagupta goes on to describe the capital Pravarapura and the river Vitasta, described in the highest terms – put to shame by the present polluted condition of the Jhelum. He concludes the highly poetic description of the city and the river by coming back to his own ancestor:

> There (in Pravarapura) the king, considering the good that would arise from it, established the Brahman on the banks of the Vitasta, with a view facing (the temple of) Sitamsumauli) in the northern direction. (v.52)

It is significant that the far-sighted king could envisage the benefit of settling a learned Brahman in his kingdom, whose vision was actually fulfilled by his descendents, Abdinavagupta's father Narasimhagupta (Cukhulaka) and Abhinavagupta himself. It is a way of Abhinavagupta stating that it was providential for his forefathers to settle in Kashmir, a land which has the highest potential of beauty, learning and spirituality. In fact, Abhinavagupta himself embodies these three aspects in his person, being as much an aesthetican, a scholar in various disciplines, and a great yogi.

The concluding verses continue with his own genealogy, reverence to his parents and teachers, as well as to his disciples whom he describes very affectionately. We need not go into this. But the last verse of the entire *Tantraloka* is a prayer to Siva:

> O Siva! This essence of the scriptures has been composed by Abhinavagupta, listen to it, you who listen to (and know) everything! Truly, it is a praise to you since it (the text) describes your nature. Being satisfied by Abhinava (or: by this praise), unite the whole world with yourself![3] (v.85)

In this prayer the universal nature of the Divine is re-stated which embraces within itself the particular.

But the key to the relationship between particular holy places, *ksetras and tirthas*, and the universal presence of the Divine is given in the context of the "Way of Space" (*desadhvan*, TA VIII), and of initiation (*diksa*, TA XV). There, the sacred places which are described according to sacred geography and can be located as such, are identified with 'places' inside the body. This practice is called sthanakalpana, where sthana refers both, to geographical places and to centres in the yogic body.

The heart-lotus is described with its petals consisting of holy places. There, the connecting points (*sandhi*) between the lotus petals and the heart are named: Jalandhara (an important *saktapitha*), Nepal, Kashmir, and others (TZ XV. 92-93). After describing all these external and internal places (*sthana*), Abhinavagupta adds characteristically: "But why expand on this topic? Everything resides in Consciousness, and through Consciousness in vital Breath (*prana*), and hence in the body, therefore it is better to go on pilgrimage to the holy places within one's body."[4] (TA XV. 96-97). Again he stresses this point a few verses later: "The one who sees that the universe (*visvam*) resides principally in Consciousness, in breath and in the body, what has he to do with other external movements (by going on pilgrimage to holy places)?" (v.100cd-101ab)

The internalization of space – and particular (sacred) places – is an intermediary stage between the importance of a region – such as Kashmir –and pure Consciousness beyond

Space and time.[5] It can be related theologically to Trika – the triad of Siva-Sakti-Nara, where the objective manifestation or individuality (*anu*) is not denied, but is integrated into the triadic unity; or to the triad of the three Saktis para-parapara-apara: particular space belonging to the apara level, its internalization in breath and body to the intermediate parapara level, and pure Consciousness to Para. Sakti is always the intermediate, the mediator between universality (Siva) and individuality (Nara, meaning not only man but any manifestation). It is at the level of Sakti where external space becomes interiorized. At the level of Siva there is no exclusion, but everything is included in the all-pervasiveness of Consciousness (Siva being identical with *samvit, cit, and prakasa*).

Spiritually the three levels are related to three spiritual ways or *upaya*: the first (lowest) being the individual way (*anava*) which uses different means, including ritual and hence also external space. The upayas are an experiential way of integration and ascension to higher levels of Consciousness, ultimately to attain the universality of Siva's all-pervasive Consciousness (*sivavyapti*).

Far from merely stating the universality of supreme Consciousness, Abhinavagupta develops it in all its implications, as expressed in the dictum:

> sarvam sarvatmakam
> "Everything is related to everything else"
> "All things are of universal nature"

and other possible translations.

This *sarvatmakatvavada* existed in the early Samkhya system, but interpreted in a naturalistic way, whereas in non-dualistic Kashmir Saivism its implication is spiritual and metaphysical: i.e. the minutest thing in the universe – a blade of grass, for example - is pervaded by the Divine Consciousness, or in other words, contains the all. Abhinavagupta develops it taking the starting-point from a verse of the *Mahabharata*, also found in the *Yoga Vasistha*:

> yasmin sarvam yatah sarvam yah sarvam sarvatasca yah/
> yasca sarvamayo nityam tasmai sarvatmane namah //
> In whom everything is, from whom everything comes,
> who is everything and everywhere,
> who is immanent in all things, eternal,
> him, the Self of all do I adore![6]

It is not possible to go into the detailed hermeneutics which Abhinavagupta gives to each phrase in his *Paratrisika Vivarana*, but it is important to note its application to all the categories of existence (*tattva*). The lowest of the 36 *tattvas* described in the Agamas is the earth element, and the highest is Siva.

Since every element of the cosmos, the human being and the Divine is not just a fragment but is itself the whole, every part of the universe contains the totality. This is shown with the example of the lowest *tattva*, earth:

> "In the supreme consciousness... all things appear completely identical with consciousness, just as water is in water, or flame is in flame, not simply like a reflected image. Whenever this supreme goddess (*para*) is described for the purpose of teaching, she is brought within the sphere of cognizance only by being considered from an inferior point of view.
>
> Similarly, Bhairava who is of the nature of light is self-proved, beginningless, primal, the ultimate in all respects, and present in everything. What else is to be said regarding him? He displays his Light identically in the expansion of all the categories of existence (the 36 *tattvas*), all the objective phenomena, and views them as Himself in his self-delight..."

"Thus the very last *tattva*, *prthivi* (earth) while maintaining its character as earth and holding within itself all the other innumerable earlier *tattvas* (e.g. water, fire, etc.) as inseparable from itself, appearing in that form and viewed in that aspect is complete in itself."...

> "There is no difference of opinion in this matter. The Siva principle can be considered complete only if it abides also in the last category, earth. So also, the consciousness of earth (dhara-samvit) can display it as identical with the central Reality in spite of its appearance as an object only when it is able to display the awareness of all the categories as inherent in the earth category."[7]

While developing this interconnectedness of all elements and the completeness of each one, Abhinavagupta makes a powerful statement which sounds like a Sutra:

> *pradesamatramapi brahmanah sarvarupam*
>
> "Even a limited space contains the entire form of Brahman."

Why does he speak of Brahman here and not of Bhairava or Siva? Because he emphasizes the etymological meaning of Brahman as that which expands[8], hence the pervasiveness of the Divine. Let us see this 'Sutra" in its context:

> "Thus it is at first the earth which has completeness. Then it is water which also, having absorbed within itself the characteristics of all the *tattvas* appears and is apprehended in completeness.... Finally, the earth itself is but the integral divine consciousness, i.e. the very Self of Siva. *Thus, even a limited space contains the entire form of Brahman*, The Sastras have declared it as their finding that 'Each *tattva* has the characteristics of all the thirty-six *tattvas*." (PTV, transl. p. 116)

Obviously, not everybody can perceive the totality in a fragment, and the all-pervasive Divine in a limited space. It is the vision of the yogi whose awareness is well-trained and who has expanded his consciousness to the Divine, universal Consciousness. And yet, potentially this vision of the totality is open to everyone.

This 'Sutra' may also give us a clue to the specific quality of a particular place – what we call sacred space, or whatever. Because the experience of the totality (*brahmanah sarvarupam*) may be more accessible in certain spaces than in others. This is the intermediate level of the *parapara sakti* which partakes of both, the transcendent and the immanent, and, as we have seen, it is at this level where the internalization of external sacred places in the body takes place (*desadhvan*, *sthanaprakalpana*). They do have their specific power through which they connect the yogi to the Supreme (*Para*).

Significantly, the *Vijnana Bhairava* describes the spiritual meaning of *ksetra*, sacred places of pilgrimage, in a brief equation: "The Great Goddess *Kundalini*) straightens herself. This is the real sacred space which is Transcendent-and-Immanent (*parapara*)."[9] (v. 154). The same Tantra again relates ksetra with the Sakti:

> "The sacred place of pilgrimage (*ksetra*) consists in supreme contemplation (*para bhavana*) and the absorption into the Sakti of Rudra, by which all sins are removed and all (beings) are saved."[10] (v. 150-151)

One can understand the two 'definitions' of *ksetra* in the *Vijnana Bhairava* also by turning them around in the sense: the real *ksetra* is that where union with the Divine takes place, or where the *Kundalini* Energy gets awakened.[11]

Let us briefly come back to the beginning, Abhinavagupta's selection of a specific universe and specific countries, and the justification he gives for selecting them:

1.Out of all the universe *brahmanda* is the foremost because it is beautified by a great manifoldness of nature (*vaicitrya*) (TA XXXVII.33).

2.In *brahmanda* the continent *Kanya* is most important, because it is here where one can ascend from the lowest levels of existence and consciousness to divinity (v. 35)

3.The foremost country within that continent is where the sacred scriptures (Sastra), originate, and that is *madhyadesa* (v. 37-38).

4.Finally, Kashmir on the high level of the Himalaya is supreme as Siva himself resides there, and in many places there are sages (*muni*) and *yoginis.* These are obviously not limited to a particular religion, they may be Buddhist, Saiva, Sufi, or whatever, as we know historically. Thus Kashmir is a place of sanctity, but also of learning because the goddess Sarada herself presides over it, both leading to the fullness described by Abhinavagupta.

In the light of the above we may not find a contradiction between these foremost, elect places in the universe, and the statement that "everything is related to all", amounting also to "every place is pervaded by the Divine."

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Foot Note

1. To mention in particular the articles by Alexis Sanderson (Oxford).
2. Vaicitrya; cf. on this concept: Bettina Baumer, "Light and Reflection: The metaphysical Basis of Aesthetics in Kashmir Shaivism" (in the press).
3. Abhinavaparitusto lokamatmikurusva.
4. kim vatibahuina sarvam samvittau pranagam tatah, tato dehasthitam tasmaddehayatanago bhavet, XV.97 ab.
5. Cf. *Vijnana Bhairava* vv. 14-15.
6. MBh XII.54.
7. Abhinavagupta, *Paratrisika Vivarana*, transl. by Jaideva Singh, pp. 111-114.
8. Cf. Abhinavagupta's commentary on the paratrisika v. 10.
9. dirghatma sa mahedevi para-ksetram parapara.
10. Definition according to the etymology *(nirvacana)* of the word *ksetra*, said to consist of the two verbs constituting it, *ksa* – and *tra-*
11. Cf. *Tantraloka* XV 86-88

Buddhism and its Development in Kashmir

Advaitavadini Kaul

"While taking a holistic view of Indian culture we find Kashmir, including its north-western areas that formed a unified whole, emerging as a source that kept nurturing Indian aesthetic and literary pursuits along with other channels of knowledge." – this was a sound statement made by the Hon'ble Minister of State of Commerce, Govt. of India, Shri Jairam Ramesh last year at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, new Delhi during the inaugural speech to the *'Sanskrit Week Celebrations,'* organised by the Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies. Another renowned scholar of our country Prof. Lokesh Chandra who is closely associated with our Centre in New Delhi (IGNCA) has been time and again emphasising upon the need of studying the manuscripts which are the works left by the scholars of Kashmir and require to be brought to light by way of getting them properly edited and translated. However, a considerable number of such works the originals of which are lost to us but are preserved in other foreign languages are being slowly concentrated upon. These works shed a flood of light on the magnitude of enormous activities that were performed in or through Kashmir.

Kashmir as a prestigious cultural centre of north-western India has remained a place of harmony amongst religions and cultures. It has been a meeting place of the three great religions that reflects upon its tolerant spirit. Its contribution to Indian philosophy, literature, art and culture from times immemorial is not only rich but also unique. It is this reality that gets reflected during the 7th cen. CE in the writings of the great Chinese scholar and pilgrim Xuanzang (Yuan Chwang) when he says that the people of Kashmir love learning and are well cultured.[1]

Speaking of Buddhism with which we are mainly concerned here, Kashmir has played an extra ordinary important role in the development of the later history and literature of Buddhism. Although we are left with almost no evidence to prove this fact but – "Recent discoveries such as the Buddhist scrolls from Gandhara, now in British Library, and a considerable number of Buddhist manuscripts from Bamiyan, now in the (Norwegian) SCHOYEN collection, to mention only the most sensational finds, fully tally with known facts. Influential scholastic traditions such as the (Mula-) Sarvastivada, an enormous number of great scholars and a high standard of learning have always been considered sort of a 'trademark' of Kashmir Buddhism right until the beginning of the second millennium CE."[2] Such remarks on the recent findings work as light poles which are shedding some light upon the once illummative state of Buddhism in Kashmir.

Buddhism is supposed to have entered the valley[3] much before king Asoka got this faith formally introduced here by sending a missionary whose name was Majjhantika. However, it was during the reign of Kaniska, the great Kusana king (c. 1st cen. CE) that marks a turning point in the history of Buddhism and its literature. Hereafter also emerged the prominent schools of Buddhist thought.[4] Buddhist scholars of Kashmir by their erudition and scholarship made Kashmir a centre of Buddhist learning for several centuries. They preached and propagated the Buddhist learning not only in the valley but also in the neighbouring countries of Central Asia reaching further to China[5]. Later, these scholars preached these teaching in Tibet as well[6]. A number of adherents were attracted to the valley itself to learn under reputed teachers.

Development of the Sarvastivada and other schools in Kashmir

As already noted Buddhism was formally introduced in Kashmir by Majjhantika, who belonged to the Sarvastivada School. This school was an off-shoot of the Theravada school. The Sarvastivada gained proficiency in Kashmir and it was the *Abhidharmapitaka* of this school that attracted a large number of scholars from distant places to gain the knowledge. The history of this school begins from the time of King Asoka (240 BCE). In order to stop the addition of new sects within the Theravada school, King Asoka convened a council under the leadership of Moggaliputta Tissa who was a Theravadin. Mogaliputta questions some of the basic tenets of the Sarvastivadins in the *Kathavatthu*[7]. The monks who supported the views of-the Theravada were known as the theras of the orthodox and the rest as unorthodox. The latter left Magadha and went Kashmir-Gandhara where they established themselves as Sarvastivadins. Xuanziang records that during

Asok's reign there was in Magadha a subtle investigator of nana-rupa (i.e. a Sarvastivadin) who put his extraordinary thoughts in a treatise which taught heresy. He further says that an attempt was made to drown into the Ganges the Sarvastivdin monks. But these monks somehow managed to save themselves and settled on the hills and the valley of a Kashmir. On learning about this Asoka became regretful and requested these monks to return back, but all in vain. The king then built five hundred monasteries for these monks at the banks of river Vitasta and gave up all Kashmir for the benefit of the sangha[8]. As such Asoka become a patron of the Sarvastivadin monks. Taranatha – the Tibetan historian also records Asoka's lavish gifts to the Sarvastivadin monks of Aparantaka, Kashmir and Tukhara[9].

The Kushan King Kaniska (circa 78 CE) was the next great patron of the Sarvastivadins. In the fourth Buddhist council convened by him in Kashmir, the majority of the participant monks were the Sarvastivadins. The main object of the council was to prepare commentaries on the canon. These commentaries called vibhasas bear witness to the literary and religious activities of the Sarvastivadin school. It was with their reliance on the vibhasas that the Sarvastivadins were later known as the vaibhasikas. These vibhasas were written in Sanskrit. The manuscripts discovered in Eastern Turkestan and Gilgit corroborate this fact[10]. According to the Tibetan historian Bu-Ston, the founder of this school was Rahulabhadra who belonged to the ksatriya caste. The members of this school wore the mantle having twenty-five to twenty-nine fringes. Their badge was an Utpala (a blue lotus), a jewel and a leaf of a tree[11]. According to a tradition, the Sarvastivadin School was divided into seven sects, viz. Mulasarvastivada, Kashyapiya, Mahisasaka, Dharmagupta, Bahusrutiya and Vibhajjavada[12]. The Mulasarvastivada had its links with Kashmir and the neighbouring regions.

It was mainly through the activities of the Sarvastivadins that Kashmir became a seat of Buddhist philosophical studies in Northern India. Subsequently this school became most widely recognized school in India. It was through this school that the Hinayana doctrines were propagated in Central Asia and further to China. A few inscriptions dating from the 2nd to the 4th Cen. CE attest to the presence of this school in Mathura, Peshawar, Kashmir and Baluchistan[13].

There are evidences to prove that besides the Sarvastivada other schools of Buddhist thought also found a place in Kashmir side by side. According to Yuan Chwang, a work entitled *Tattvasamgraha* written by a Kashmiri scholar named Bodhila expounded the philosophy of the Mahasanghika school. The scholar composed this work in a Mahasanghika monastery in Kashmir[14]. *Satyasiddhisastra* or the *Tattvasiddhisastra* is an important work in the Chinese sastra collection. It was composed by Harivarman – a famous Sarvastivadin teacher of Kashmir in 253 CE. He is reported to have composed this work keeping in view all the divisions of Buddhist church, that had arisen till his time. The original work is lost but is preserved in Chinese translation of Kumarajiva who introduced the Satyasiddhi school based on this *sastra* in China. This work was held in high esteem in China[15].

Buddhist Literature in Chinese and Tibetan Collection

The vast Buddhist literature which has been conventionally divided into two classes of the Hinayana and the Mahayana could remain preserved only outside the frontiers of India. The original literature was composed either in Pali or in Sanskrit whereas the translations were mainly in Chinese and Tibetan, although the texts were also translated into the languages of the regions to which Buddhism was introduced. Pali canon remained preserved in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand. A few texts belonging to the vast Sanskrit canon were discovered in Nepal. The fragments of the manuscripts of the Sanskrit canon were discovered in dilapidated Buddhist grottos of Afghanistan and the ruins of Buddhist temples on the desserts of Central Asia[16]. But the entire Sanskrit canon remained preserved only in large collections of Chinese and Tibetan translations. These collections also contain a vast literature that was translated from various Indian sources. This literature includes commentaries and exegetical texts which are otherwise lost in their original form. The collections also include dictionaries which were compiled in order to facilitate translations. The role of Kashmiri scholars has been immense in the building up of these collections as well. Their work and virtues were respected by the Buddhists of other countries. Many Kashmiri scholars were invited by the Chinese and Tibetan rulers and scholars to their countries. What is most important as already noted is that all these details come to us from the documents of these areas.

In my book entitled *Buddhist Savants of Kashmir their Contributions Abroad*[17] I have attempted to record the different activities undertaken and the contributions made by Kashmiri scholars in the development of Buddhist literature. These contributions have been classified in the categories of Early Buddhism (viz. Hinayana), Mahayana, Buddhist Logic and the Esoteric

Buddhism. We take a brief look on the same in the following description:

Early Buddhism (Hinayana)

Early Buddhist canon is traditionally divided into three *pitakas* viz. *Vinaya, Sutra* and *Abhidharma.* Through Chinese and Tibetan sources we get to know the names of Kashmiri scholars who have translated the texts belonging to all these categories from time to time since the beginning of the Cristian era. I have discussed them in detail in my research work[18].

Mahayana Buddhism

Mahayana Buddhism was gaining ground in India from the Kushana period. It became a predominant form of Buddhism all over India till 7th cen. CE and contained a large section of literature in the form of numerous *Mahayana-sutras* and philosophical works in Sanskrit. It was with its exposition beyond the frontiers of India that this literature got translated into the languages of those countries to which it spread. In this connection Kashmiri scholars were playing a predominant role from the very beginning. Buddhist meditation *(dhyana)* has a long tradition in Kashmir[19]. The first patriarch of the *dhyana* Buddhist school in Kashmir was Punyamitra who was later succeeded by his disciple Punyatrata. His two disciples Dharmatrata (before 3rd cen. CE) [20] and Buddhasena were jointly respected as third patriarchs. The method of *dhyana* expounded by Dharmatrata was introduced in China by Buddhabhadra of Central India who studied in Kashmir and visited China in the beginning of 5th Cen. CE[21]. Subsequently we find the names of a host of Kashmiri scholars who translated Mahayana works during their stay in different part of Central Asia, China and later on in Tibet also[22].

Buddhist Logic

The interest in logic got manifested in Buddhism in consequences of the writings of Dignaga during the 5th cen. CE and of Dharmakirti during the 7th Cen CE Dharmottaracarya was a Kashmiri Buddhist logician who wrote two commentaries on the two works of Dharmakirti (Pramanaviniscaya and Nyayabindi) besides composing four original works on logic during the 8th cen. CE. Logic reappeared in the 11th century and there existed a brilliant school of logic in Kashmir. The prominent names of the Kashmiri scholars who earned fame during this period were Jnanasribhadra, Parahitabhadra, Bhavyaraja and Manoratha[23] Sankaranada is the only logician about whom Tibetan historians furnish some biographical information. Accordingly, Sanskaranada of Kashmir is reported having received the title of *Paramopasaka mahapandita brahmana* and he is "considered as a second Dharmakirti." Taranatha says that he belonged to a family of Kashmiri Brahmins[24]. Through Tibetan sources which are sometimes attested by Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* also, we get more Kashmiri names till the 13th cen CE who interested themselves in Buddhist logic[25].

Esoteric Buddhism

Esoteric Buddhism developed out of different tendencies of the Mahayana. *Mantras, dharanis* etc. began to assume increasing importance for a yogi and these were believed to possess great magical powers. We find counterparts of these *mantras* and *dharanis* in the *parittas* in Pali literature, which were thought to protect the reciters against all evils[26]. This aspect of the Mahayana Buddhism included various forms of mysticism known as ***Vajrayana, Kalacakrayana, Sahayayana*** etc. This form also introduced the cults of many gods and goddesses by whose favour the devotees were expected to attain siddhi (perfection). In Tibetan collections we get names of a considerable number of Kashmiri siddhas who had attained *siddhi* and had also contributed original writings in this field of knowledge. For example *Ravigupta* belonging to the 8th Cen.CE was proficient in magic spells and he had attained the *siddhi* of Tara – the female aspect of Bodhisattva. According to a tradition goddess Tara bestowed on him a *stotra* with the help of which one could perform any kind of magical rite. This ritual had earned a wide currency in Tibet. Seven works of Ravigupta are all dedicated to Tara. Sarvajnamitra was another Kashmiri Buddhist siddha who was a student of Ravigupta and was a devout worshipper of Tara. He composed four works in praise of Tara. Sragdharastotra is his well known hymn in thirty-seven verses. There are three Tibetan translations and a commentary on this hymn available in Tibetan collections. Likewise the other names and works of the Kashmiri siddha recorded in Tibetan collections are: *Gangadhara, Ratnavajra, Somasri, Parahitabhadra, Sajjana* and *Sraddhakaravarman*[27].

Interstingly, in the present context, we also find the name of a nun as Sri Lakshmi of Kashmir, who figures in the transmission of the cycle of the Mahakarunika as she enjoyed special blessing from Avalokitesvara. She preached the ritual of fasting to propitiate the great Compassionate One. She taught this ritual to Pandita yes-ses bzan-po (Jnanabhadra). Xuanziang has also made mention of a similar rite when he points to a small sangharama near the slopes of the Gopadri in Srinagar, where a miraculous statue of Avalokitesvara was venerated[28]. Besides practicing the ritual Laksmi also composed some texts which are dedicated to Avalokitesvara.

Somanatha is another important Kashmiri name who obtained proficiency in *Kalacakra* system and preached it in Tibet. Other Kashmiri masters who composed or translated esoteric works into Tibetan were Subhutisrisanti, Mahajana, Jnanasri, Parahitabhadra, Kanakavarman, Sakyasi (12th-13th Cen.CE), Sugatasri, Vimalasribhadra (14th cen.), Dhrmadhara (14th cen.) and lastly Sumanasri who expounded the cycle of Padmajala to the great Tibetan historian Bu-ston besides translating some esoteric works[28].

Dictionaries

The famous Sanskrit-Chinese dictionary titled *Ching-yu Tien Chu Tzu-Yuan* was a compilation produced by the Imperial Institute for Transmission of Buddha-Dharma in Sung China. This dictionary was jointly compiled by Dharmapala – a monk of Kashmir and Wei-Ching, who was a nephew of Li-yu (937-978 CE), the dispossessed king of Southern Tang Kingdom. This work was accomplished in 1035 CE. It is recorded that the King gave a title to this work and also wrote a preface to it[30].

During 8th cen. CE Kashmiri scholars Jinamitra and Danasila collaborated with other scholars in campiling an etymological dictionary in Tibetan at the request of king Khri-Ide-sron-bcan Ral pa-Can (circa 814 CE)[31].

Buddhsit Kavya (Poetic Literature of Kashmir

There are two poetical compositions one is the *Kapphinabhyudaya* of Sivasvamin (9th cen. CE) and the other is the well-known *Avadanakalpalata* of *Ksemendra* (11th cen. CE). It seems that both these compositions were written in Sanskrit at the instance of some specific personalities. Kapphinabhyudaya being a contribution to Sanskrit literature in general is particularly a contribution to Buddhist Sanskrit literature produced in Kashmir. It deals with a Buddhist legend of king Kapphina, well-known in both Pali and Sanskrit Buddhist literature. Although the original manuscript is lost, there are some transcripts of the poem available with the help of which the text was critically edited for the first time with an introduction by Pandit Gauri Shankar in 1937[32].

In 1987 Prof. Michael Hahn of Germany located some lost folios of this work from a manuscripts collection in Kyoto, Japan. A facsimile edition of these folios was brought out from Kyoto itself under '*Sanskrit Manuscripts of the Buddhist Sutras from Nepal*' in 1990. On the basis of the findings in Japan Prof. Hahn parly revised the readings of the edition of Pt. Gauri Shankar and got the same reprinted in 1989 from Delhi[33]. Prof. Hahn also translated the twentieth chapter of this work into English and got the same published from Germany in Prof. Bechert's Felicitation volume[34]. A new edition of this work is going to be brought out soon (probably 2006 only) from Japan which will contain the facsimiles of the two Newari manuscripts –one found in Kathamandu and the other located in Kyota along with the edited text and the translation of the eighth chapter by Prof. Hahn. Who is highly impressed with this work.

At the end of his work the poet Sivasvamin has given an account of himself. According to this account and also the colophon of the work, he belonged to Kashmir and his father was Bhattarkasvamin. The poet says that he has written his composition at the instance and encouragement of his Buddhist preceptor Candramitra. He dedicates his poem to Siva which clearly shows that although he was a Saiva by faith he possessed equal respect for Buddhist faith. It also proves his mastery in the Buddhist lore that made it possible for him to write on the Subject with such authority. The Buddha is invoked in the benedictory verse of the poem. Mount Malaya is compared with the calm and sublime image of the Buddha. In one of the verses the Buddha preaches a sermon on the *hetumala*, the chain of causes which binds a man to the mortal world. The poet particularly emphasizes detachment from the material world as a pre-requisite for the achievement of salvation. The same point is discussed in detail in the *Avadanasataka*. The work presents a striking testimony to the religious freedom and the eclectic and catholic spirit of the age in which Buddhism flourished side by side with other brahmanical faiths viz. Saivism and Vaisnavism[35].

Ksemendra's *Avadanakalpalata* is a contribution to traditional *Avadana* literature. His son Somendra added one more *avadana* to his father's work in order to make it a collection of 108 avadanas (an auspicious number). He also wrote an Introduction to this work. As is evident Ksemendra has drawn up traditional *avadanas*, but in a poetical form. The title *Kalpalata* is really a wish yielding creeper of the great achievements of Boddhisattva.

Its sub-divisions are also metaphorically given the name pallava or leaves under which one can repose in a contented state.

No complete collection of these *avadanas* was available in India for several centuries. In the collection of Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts, brought from Nepal, there appeared only the second half of the work. In an invocatory verse in this collection was indicated the non-availability of the first half of the avadanas. But during the middle of 1882 CE late Shri S.C. Das discovered a clean block-printed copy of this work in the Potala printing establishment at Lhasa (Tibet). It was printed during 1662-63 CE and contained 620 folios with a transliteration of Sanskrit text in Tibetan script and also a Tibetan translation side by side. The manuscript of this work was presented by Sakya Sri Pandita of Kashmir in 1202 CE to the Sakya Pandita Kun-dgah-rgyal-msthan. It was translated into Tibetan seventy years later by Sonton lo-tsa-ba under the auspices of Phags-pa-the spiritual guide of the emperor Kublai Khan. Illustrious Sonton lo-tsa-ba translated this work under the guidance of Indian Pandita Mahakavi Laksmikara at the Monestary of Sge-hdun bshi sde in Manyul (Kirong). Then the work, alongwith its translation was first in block print by celebrated Shwalu lo-tsa-ba Rin-chen chos Skyon bsan-po.S.C. Das and Harimohan Vidyabhushan published the Tibetan-Sanskrit bilingual edition of the text in Bibliotheca Indica Series (1888-1913 CE). The Sanskrit text was again edited by P. L. Vaidya and brought out from Mithila Vidyapeetha, Darabhanga in 1959 under Buddhist Sanskrit texts.

In his Introduction to the Avadanakalpalata, Somendra says that it was first of all a Brahmana called Sajjanananda who requested Ksemendra to write the *avadanas.* Then,

Nyakka a learned friend of his also put forth the same request. Subsequently Ksemendra undertook the task of writing his *Avadanakalpalata.* He discontinued after writing only the three *avadanas.* Somendra says that the Buddha himself in a dream further initiated him to complete the avadanas. Acarya Viryabhadra an authority on Buddhist treatises came to assist him and Acarya Suryasri was the scribe. Somendra further gives the date of the completion I this work as the 27th year at the beginning of vaisakha the birth day of the Buddha which corresponds with 1052 CE.

Ksemendra who belonged to the line of the ministers of Kashmir has many works to his credit, some of which are known by name only. He had a variety of interests and has written on different subjects. Being influenced by Buddhism he must have studied it very deeply. Finding him well acquainted in the lore he might have been requested to write the *avadanas* which he could accomplish successfully. Further, being impressed by the faith he also included the Buddha, among the ten incarnations of Visnu in his Dasavataracarita.

A large number of Tibetan translators as well as scholars devoted their attention to the study of this work which contained the largest number of *avadanas* than any other work of this class. Each avadana contains a distinct story of an incident in the life of the Buddha illustrating a particular moral. The Buddhist propensity of self-sacrifice is brought to a climax here. In the last chapter the author has illustrated very well the six perfections *(paramitas)* viz. charity, moral character, patience, diligence, contemplation and wisdom of the Bodhisattva.

Somendra has composed very interesting verses emphasising upon the merits of his father's work which I quote here:

"Those well-known caves georgious with the array of golden sculptures and the pleasing murals depicting the stories of the Buddha, have passed away in the cause of time. But the viharas of moral merits, excellent and delightful, erected by my father, in which the avadanas with weighty meanings underlying them are carved out as it were, and painted in variegated colours (letters) by the pencil of the goddess of learning, will not perish even at the end of time, not even by the ravages of fire or of water. Because these avadanas represent such firm and attractive images of the Buddha which illuminate the whole atmosphere and bring blessings (as in Buddhist viharas there stood the attractive sculptures of the Buddha standing all around adorned with the rows of beautiful and fragrant flowers infront of them creating a pious atmosphere)[36]."

Thus with this verse conveying deep meaning as also pointing to the past glory of the faith I conclude my presentation.

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'Speech' as 'Ultimate Self' in Kashmir Saivism

K. C. Sharma

Shaivism is the earliest and the most prevalent cult. **Siva-Shakti** cults were present in Vedic Period also. The historyof the introduction of Shaivism is shrouded in mystery. In fact it flourished there from the dawn of history. The facts furnished by Kalhana in the *Rajatarangni*, the chronicle of the kings of Kashmir indicates the wide prevalence of the Saiva cult in the valley from an early period. From time to time various philosophical doctrines reached Kashmir from outside which had their impact on the philosophy that had grown there among the followers of Saiva cult. Buddhism was welcomed by Kashmiris long before the Christian era and Kashmir became its stronghold since the time of Asoka (273-232 BCE). According to Buddhist tradition, Kanishka held the 4th Buddhist council in Kashmir. In spite of the phenomenal success of the Buddhism in Kashmir for a few centuries, Saivism continued to be the vital force.

The revival of Saivism came in Kashmir from the 7th century CE when Buddhism was disappearing. The early Kashmir Saivism based on a number of Tantras seems to have preached a dualistic doctrine. From 8th or 9th century, however, Saiva system of Kashmir assumed a new character. Based on pure advaita tattva it henceforth began to preach a sort of idealistic monism. The new system took the name of Trika Sastra. The founder of this new doctrine was a holy sage named Vasugupta, who probably lived in the early years of the 9th century CE. Vasugupta revealed the Siva-Sutras which forms the bedrock of whole superstructure of Kashmir Saivism. The Siva-Sutras do not only enunciate the fundamental concepts of Kashmir Saivism but also show a way to practical realization. This line of thaught was developed by two acaryas of 9th century CE Bhatta Kallata and

Somanand Bhatta Kallata wrote *Sarvasva*, *Tattvartha-Cintamanni* and *Spand-sutra* and Somanand supplied the logical reasoning by his *Sivadrsti* and thus founded a system of Advaita philosophy of the Saivas on the basis of what was first taught as a system of faith. This development resulted into the emergence of the three different forms of Kashmir Saivism i.e., the *Agama-sastra*, the *Spanda-sastra* and *Pratyabhijna-sastra* corresponding to the three broad divisions of this literature. The whole literature comprising its three divisions is known *Astir-sastra* or *Advaita Kashmir Saivism.*

Agama-Shastra: The beginning of this sastra is obscure. It is believed to have been originally revealed by seers and handed down to their pupils. Most of these 64 agamas have disappeared. Out of these agamas following belong to Kashmir Shaivism:

I.Malinivijaya; II. Savacchanda; III. Vijnana Bhairava; IV. Ucchusma Bhairava; V. Ananda Bhairava; VI. Mrgendra; VII. Matanga; VIII. Netra; IX. Naisvasa; X. Svayambhuva; XI. Rudra Yamala.

In the early stages of their development approach of the agamas was dualistic but the tradition preserved in Kashmir refers to the Siva-Sutras as revealed in order to negate the dualistic approach and to establish the highest form Shaivagamas that taught pure advaitism (monism),

Spanda-Sastra:

This sastra is based on *spandasutra*, commonly known as *spanda karakas.* These *Spanda-Sutras* are based on *Shiva-Sutras* of Vasugupta. *Spnada-Sutras* seem to have been composed by Bhatta Kallatta a pupal of Vasugupta. Other works which are related to this branch are: *Spanda-sarvasva* of Bhatta Kalhatta, *Pratiyabhijna karika* of Ramakantha, *Pradipika* of Utpal Vaisava, *Spand-Sandoha*, *Spanda-Nirnaya* and *Parapravesika* of *Khemaraja.*

The Pratayabhijna-Shastra:

The central issue of tantras as interpreted by Kashmir Saivism is the recognition *(pratyabhijna)* of the self. The founder of *pratyabhijna-sastra* is Somanand a pupil of Vasugupta. His *Shivadrsti* is the base of *Pratyabijna-sastra*[1]. Other works which are related to this branch are: *Isvara* –

pratyabhijna of Utpal, ***Isvarapratyabhijna vivritti*** and ***vivritti vimrsini of Abhinavagupta.*** Other important work related to this system is ***Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta.***

Pratyabhijna system was a progressive branch of monistic Shaivism which was then prevalent in Kashmir. It is based on monistic ***Saiva tantras.*** The main characteristic of the non-sectarian system is the realization of the highest reality i.e., self-realisation.

The Kashmir Saivism is much famous and important among the other orthodox and heterodox schools. It is based on tantric tradition. According to the scholars the tantric system is parallel system to the vedic tradition. Both the Vedas (Nigama) and the tantras (Agama) are provide the knowledge of reality. But tantras have special significance than Vedas. The orthodox people did not allow all castes to take equal opportunity even in spiritual practices. But tantric tradition have no restriction of caste, creed or colour for the qualification of Sadhana. This is the sharp contrast with the orthodox attitude that shudra does not have the right to study the Vedas and to take the path of liberation.

Conception of four Levels of Speech in Kashmir Saivism

According to the Abhasavadin the whole universe is a mere manifestation of the ultimate Self or Parama-Siva as the images of an imagination the scenes of the dream or the creation of a person wh has attained certain yogic powers (yoginirmana) are those of the limited selves. Our experience tells us that things of imagination, dream and yogic creation have no existence independently or separately form the self which is responsible for their manifestation. The Abhas-avadin holds that the whole universe arises from, has its being within, is maintained by and again merges in the same universal consciousness or Self. He also holds that it is in its essence the same as that from which it rises, just as the waves of the ocean are essentially the same as the ocean itself. This Self, the Ultimate Reality, he conceives a "prakasa vimarsamaya". The universe also he broadly divides into a substance and speech (vacya and vacaka). Speech not mere as a physical phenomenon but as that of which the words are mere symbol. The word "vak" (speech) is used for the immaterial part of the universe, because the grossest form of vimarsa is distinguished from its other forms by its association with physical sound which is its symbol and has a different physical substratum as opposed to the purely intellectual substratum of the idea. The substance is the grossest manifestation of the prakasa aspect of the universal consciousness and the speech is that of the vimarsa. Thus para (Transcendent) a distinctive name of the ultimate reality by which referred to when its vimarsa aspect is intended is intended to be emphasized. The para is called speech not in its gross form in which we hear it, but in the most subtle one like self consciousness within. In this form it is independent of all conventions, rather, it is their very life in the conditions of Maya[2]. Thus substance and speech are one of their most subtle original form, though in the stage of Maya both seem to have separate existence. This state of perfect unity of consciousness and its initiative content (prakasavimarsaikya) is called the Para state.

Citih Pratyavamarsatma para vak svarosoditya[3].

The idea of that speech is the Ultimate Self can be supported by the statement of Bhartrihari-

Anadinidhanam brahma sabdatattvam yadaksaram[1]
Vivartate artha bhavena prakriya jagato yatah[4]

That speech is the Ultimate God and to run this world He changes Himself in the form of this creation.

Panini also in favour of this that the process of speaking is form the sou. He describes in his book that:

Atma buddhya sametyarthana mano yunkte vivaksya[1]
Manah kayagnimahanti sa prerayati marutam[5]

Atma with buddhi perceives things and sets the mind to an intention of speaking the mind (then) gives imputes to the fire with the body and later drives the breathe out by which the sound can be produced.

All that we hear and can possibly hear exists in the para stage a speech exactly in the manner in which all that we determinately perceives exists in the stage of in-determinate knowledge. But before it can find manifestation in gross speech technically called vaikhari (gross speech), it passes through two intermediate stages, known as pasyanti (visionary) and madhyama (middle).

Speech is not only the means to convey messages to others, it is also a way to understand thing personally. When we choose to convey ideas to others we generally use spoken language, known as vaikhari. So vakhari is the gross speech. A finer form of speech that serves as the medium for thinking and understanding, through which a person forms definite and indefinite ideas about words and their meaning is medhyama (mental speech). A word its meaning, and the undifferentiated idea of both, are always closely combined in our understanding. We never form any idea without mixing it with some word-image, which shines within our consciousness as the essence of the idea. Such word-images penetrate and provide both definite and indefinite ideas, and are in fact the essence of our ideas. This term madhyama means both interior and in between. It is considered interior speech because it has the subtle between because its abode lies between the field of vakhiri (gross physical body) and pasyanti (the inner form of a being consisting of pure consciousness). As we have said madhyama speech contains a word-image, a word-image, a word meaning and a unified idea of both chining together within consciousness. There is also a mutual diversity of these three elements in madhyama though they are not as distinctly separate as in vakhari. If we carefully contemplate our thought process we can be become aware that our ideas, our word-image, and the objects understandable through these words and images, are actually three different elements having a close mutual relationship. All three elements of madhayama shine simultaneously inside the faculty of a person understanding, but they shine there as three different elements, bound together by a sort of mutual inseparability. In this case inseparability does not mean unity. Rather, it is a constant relationship inside the field of diversity.

There is a still finer level of speech known as pasyanti, which resides in the innermost part of our being and is far subtler in character than madhayama. Pasyanti is known as the 'beholding speech' because through its medium enlightened people can behold all objective existence within themselves. Since Pasyanti is found within the pure being of a person, beyond mind and everything mental, the tendency to make distinction among word, word meanings, and the idea of both, has little or no effect in this form of speech. In other words, pasyanti shines in a state that transcends all types of ideation, or vikalpa, because ideas are formed by the mind. Pasyanti beholds objective existence in its unidiversified form of simpie 'this-ness' (idanta). But in the process does not form any idea, or vikalpa about it. Pasyanti shines within as a pure self awareness and appears as 'I' and 'this' (aham idam), where the aspect of this-ness is very faint. This is known as the stage of partial unity since. All the three elements of mental speech shine in pasyanti in an un-diversified form, and since both the beholding subject (aham), and the behold object (idam), are present in pasyanti, clearly there exists an awareness of more than one element. Therefore, this form of speech is said to belong to a stage of partial diversity as well.

There is another type of awareness beyond pasyanti known as paravak, the Supreme Speech, which does not behold any this-ness but shines beholding nothing but itself[6]. It shines as the luminous revelation of just one thing. The pure subjective 'I' 'consciousness' transcending all physical and mental means of knowledge. The pure awareness of the self shines in para as the infinite, external, all containing, perfect, pure, and divinely potent subject 'I'. It is not a subject in relation to any object but only an absolute and independent subject. This is the supreme and transcendental Speech consisting of pure awareness of the real Self[7]. Uthpal Deva writes about paravak in this way – Self awareness is the very soul of consciousness. It is spontaneously arising supreme Speech (vak) and is that Self dependence of the Absolute God, which is known as His Supreme Lordship. It is a kind of vibrative activity, and is the supreme basic existence, unconditional by time, space, extra. Being the real essence of the Supreme Lord, it is said to be his heart, it is by virtue of this self awareness that He manifests Himself as objective existence[8].

Parama-Siva as Cause of Creation

The Kashmir Saivism speaks of Ultimate Reality as being the Absolute (paramashiva), and so that necessarily be seen as serving the substratum of all that is manifest. And the manifest world, of which we are a part is, but the actual manifestation of the Absolute. The world as the appearance of the Absolute is not a unreal or illusory. The Absolute Reality while manifesting itself as the finite world; is nothing but the actual manifestation of Siva as consciousness whatever there is in the world is nothing but Shiva itself. The process of Siva becoming, for all practical purposes, the world itself is termed as the theory of appearance (abhasavada). Parama-Shiva, who is essentially the Subject, becomes manifest as an object through his free Will. Creation is, thus an apparent bifurcation of the Absolute Subject as finite subject and object. Whole creation is the manifestation of the subject as an object, destruction or involution is the assimilation or merger of the subject. Accordingly, the entire process might be described as a subject-object and object-subject circularity. Svantrnimagnah padartha samuha tasya bhasane ahamiti svantah pradeshat idamiti vahira bhasane[9] Creation is nothing but externalization of that which is already one with consciousness.

Maha guhantarnirmagna bhavajataprakashakah,
Jnanashakti pradipen yah sada tam stunah Shivam[10]

Creation is not a new production, it is a mere manifestation of that which is internal. It can be compared to the creation of new piece of art by the Artist. In this case, nobility consists in the external manifestation of the ideas which previously existed as identical with the consciousness of the artist. The universal creation might also be conceived on the analogy of creativity of the individual. Actions of an individual are nothing but the external manifestation of his ideas which in the original state were one with his self consciousness. When the individual awakes up, his individual creation or manifestation of his ideas and activities, begins. The universal creation likewise, being with the awakening, which is nothing but externalization of the universal consciousness (unmesa)[11]. Again, when the individual goes to sleep, all his ideas and activities of awaking life cease to become manifest and merge back with his self consciousness[12]. In the same way, dissolution or destruction of the created universe might be described as a sleep of the absolute consciousness (*nimesa*). The universe is nothing but the psychical life of the subjects projected outwardly. When Saiva awakens, the world which is potentially latent in Him starts becoming manifest (creation). The world exists when He is awake. The world merges and rests in a potential state in Him, when He is asleep.

Process of manifestation through Speech

The process of manifestation is nothing but a gradual bifurcation of the unity of Saiva and Shakti, being an becoming, bodha and svatantrya. There is direct correspondence between the manifestation of the Supreme Speech (*para-vak*) and objective manifestation of the universe. The Kashmir Saivism is of the view that shakti, which is the innate vibrating power of the Lord is identical with the Speech and the world out there is nothing but its manifestation condition.

Sa hi vishvasya vacyavacakatmana dvidha avabhasah[13]

Already has been discussed that there are four hierarchically structured manifestational stages through which the Speech descends and ultimately manifests itself as the create, and in terms of which the spoken speech is actualized. The four manifestational stages of the Speech are the Transcendent (para), The Visionary (pasyanti) The Middle (madhyama), and the Gross (vakhari). The fisrt stage the Transcendent may not be considered as the stage manifestational descent of the Speech for it is a stage that is characterised by the principle of pure unity. It is the state of the Absolute, and so in it the Self (aham) alone exists. As the state of pure unity, the Transcendent at this level accordingly suffers from no differentiation, which actually is the character of the manifest. In relation to the 36 manifestational categories (tattva) of creation, the Transcendent state embodies pure unity of Saiva-Shakti. Whether we speak of this state as that of the Transcendent, or of Saiva-Shakti or of Param-Saiva, it is one and same. At this Supreme level absolute, although the source of creation, is seen to be beyond the creational categories. The Self at this stage is conscious of itself without having any consciousness of the object, which means that the Self is conscious of itself not as an object (aham-idam), but only a pure subject. It amounts to saying that consciousness at this level does not go out of itself in search of object, but remains absorbed within its own subjectivity. It is for this reason that this state is referred is as that of the pure subject, and accordingly the Absolute Ego is viewed as being non-relational[14]. The Absolute Speech (*para-vak*) descends to the stage of the Visionary (*pasyanti*) when desire arises within it for the creational manifestation. The arising of desire within the Speech is linked to the swelling *(ucchunata) of the* seed, which denotes the first step for the coming onto being o the plant[15]. The seed upon its swelling, develops an inclination (unmukha) towards manifesting itself as the plant[16]. It is a state of in which the actual manifestation does not take place. There is only an inclination or desire to become manifest. Among the five powers of Shiva i.e., cit, ananda, iccha, jnana and kriya that is dominant at this stage is that of Will (*iccha-shakti*) and may be seen as the first step towards the actualization of three creational powers of Saiva, which are will – knowledge – action (*iccha, jnana, kriya*). When looked at from the point of the categories of existence it represents the stste of Sadashiva and Sadashiva is seen as representing the desire for creational manifestation. As the Transcendent stage represents the pure unity of the Absolute, so the Visionary embodies the state of unity in difference (*bhedabheda*), or what is technically called aham-idam (I and this). What it means is this: At this stage the process of objectification beings implicitly, which ultimately results in the emergence of differentiation and distinction (bheda) of phenomenal diversity. This stage is analogues to the liquid of peacock's egg. It is in the liquid of the egg, which prior to its fertilization, represents complete unity, in which the multi-coloured plum of the peacock is potentially contained. The visionary stage may, thus, be seen as representing the initial inclination towards objectification. At this stage no difference is pronounced between the world and its object. It is just in the making both the word (vacya) and the object (vacaka) are in an undifferentiated state. Although the consciousness of object (*idam*) may have risen, yet it is not so pronounced as to result in the bifurcation between the 'I' (*aham*) and the 'this' (*idam*).

The next stage, after the Visionary is the Middle (madh yama) and is lower and grosser than the above two stages, it is, however, subtler when compared to the vakhari or the Gross stage. Being in between the Transcendent and the Visionary, on the one hand, and the Gross, on the other, this stage has, therefore, been called as the that of the middle. At this level of descent of the Speech the creational process is more pronounced and direct. When this stage is seen from the perspective of five powers of Shiva, it represents the power of knowledge or cognition (jnana-shakti). It means that the idea of the universe at this stage is in the process of being formed. Whatever creational activity at this stage may be taking shape, it is in the shape of idea. The actualization of this idea into a physical reality, called the world, terminates at the gross level when looked at from the perspective of the categories of existence, it represents the category of Ishvan, which is the equated with the power of knowledge. Accordingly it is said that middle stage in encapsulates the consciousness of 'this I am' (idam-aham) while the consciousness of difference has just begun at the Visionary stage, it takes much sharper turn at the level of the Middle. Finally, we have the Gross stage, (*vaikhari*), it is at this stage that the actualization of the world has an objective and matrial entity occurs. The Gross stage, thus, is seen as the most Gross manifestation of the Speech. When seen from the point of five powers of Siva, it represents the power of action (kriyashakti), and is accordingly equated with the Sadvidya category of existence. The manifestation of the speech as the objective world, according to the Kashmir Saivism does not denote its materiality. Rather the manifestation of the speech as the world is seen as an appearance (abhasa). What it means is this: The world as an object is emitted by the subject, and that means within the Kashmir Saivism idealistic framework, that consciousness has externalized itself. Accordingly has this stage been termed as the one which proclaims: "I am and this is" (*aham ca idam*).

36 Creational Categories (tattva) in Kashmir Saivism:

1. Saiva 2. Shakti 3. Sadasaiva 4. Ishvara 5. Sadvidya 6. Maya 7. Kala 8. Vidya9. Raga10. Kala 11. Niyati 12. Purusa 13. Prakrti 14. Buddhi15. Ahankara 16. Manas

The Remaining Categories (tattvas) are as follows:-

I) The Five Senses or powers of perception called *jnanendriyas*, namely:

a)Power of smelling (*ghranendriya*).

b)Power of tasting (*rasaneendriya*).

c)Power of seeing (*caksuri ndriya*).

d)Power of feeling by touch (*sparsanendriya*).

e)Power of hearing (sravanedriya).

II) The capacities of activity, called the *Karmendriyas (organs of action)* namely:

a)The capacity of resting and enjoying passively (*upasthendriya*)

b)The capacity of rejecting or discarding (*payvindriya*).

c)The capacity of locomotion (*padendriya*).

d)The capacity of handing (*hastendriya*).

e)The capacity of voicing (*vagindriya*).

III)The five subtle elements (*tanmatras*) of:

a)Smell (*gandha tanmatra*).

b)Taste (*rasa tanmatra*)

c)Form or colour (*raupa tanmatra*)

d)Touch (*sparsa tanmatra*) and

e)Sound (*sabda tanmatra*).

IV)The five Gross elements of:

a)Earth (*prtavi*)

b) Water (*jala*)

c) Light (*agni*)

d) Air (*vayu*) and

e) Ether (*akasa*)

Foot Notes

1) *Ishvarpratyabhijna* karika; 1, 2-3
2) *Ishvarapratyabhijna* vimarsini; 1, 5, 18
3) Ibid 1, 5-13
4) *Vakyapadiya*: 1, 1
5) *Panini sikasa*; 6-7
6) *Shivadrsti*; 3, 2
7) *Vijnanabhairava*; 18-19
8) *Ishvarapratyabhijna* karika; 1, 5, 13-15
9) Bhaskari; Vol. 1, P. 47
10) Ibid P, 193
11) *Ishvarapratyabhijna* karika; 3, 1, 3
12) *Vijnanabhairava*; P, 75
13) *Tantraloka*; 3, 67
14) *Ishvarapratyabhijna* vimarshini; 1, 5, 13
15) *Pratyabhinahrdayam*; 11
16) Siva

The Problem of Identity and Regional Demands in Jammu and Kashmir

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The concept of Regional identity and Regional Demands has captured the stage of social science. The Regional aspirations and sense of Regional identity have offered a new dimension to the assertiveness of ethnic group. A sense of Regional identity means a sense of being at with oneself... it means, at the same time, a sense of Regional affinity with a community's sense of being at one with its future as history or mythology.[1]

Regional Identity demands in South and South- East Asian societies have followed a uniform pattern. These Regional identity and autonomy demands evolved over a large span of time may be located in specific geographical and environmental spaces. They have the characteristics of a common language spoken by groups of people with a history of observing common traditions, rites and rituals. All these components have endowed these Regional identity aspirations with an aura of primordiality. The prominent aspect of these Regional identity aspirations been their inclusiveness in absorbing new and sometimes even foreign influences of religions and cultures resulting in adding layer in the formation of their distinct personalities.[2] The incorporation of shared historical and cultural values shaped these Regional identity demands in a mould in which the religious edges of the identity remained subdued or even dormant. It is interesting to note that the capacity of absorption and accommodation of these regional identity demands resulted in two diametrically opposite consequences. At one level, these demands remained humane and inclusive, incorporating and reflecting broader human and universal values. Here at the other level, they acquired the traits of particularism which in the later stages of building multi-cultural and multi- ethnic nation states posed many problems.[3]

The post modern thought recognizes two basic human urges; urge for identity and urge for unity. Both would be crushed in forcible uniformed communities. The process of modernization, democratization, information explosion and technological revolution, it has been universally acknowledged, sharpens urge for identity. Unity and identity are quite different things. Unity is international in references, international perspective and rooted in a political feeling. Where as identity is local and regional, rooted in imagination and work of culture.[4] In fact there is no singular construct of identity. Identity has multiple natures making people live many identities at a time. This is probably because of the cross cutting nature of social cleavages and oceanic evolution and formation of identity. Yet what is more pronounced is regional identity. Even the individual's objective marker of identity acquires regional specificity. It is the performative variation in identity that distinguishes one region from other. We may presume that the regional identity and entity as significant bearing an approach taking towards the demand, or the regional configuration. These regional identities - its formation, expression, assertion, has been a very complicated phenomenon. Most surprisingly regionalism or autonomy movement is based mainly on the concept of identity in Jammu and Kashmir as in other states of India.[5]

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is composed of three main regions, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Jammu and Kashmir is a deeply divided state fragmented along regional, religious and ethnic differences. The internal politics of the state, marked by internal - regional tensions, has influenced the attitude of the people on the question of their external affiliations. In each of the three regions of the state, a different attitude on the issue of accession can be clearly noticed from the very day of the states accession to India. Before independence, the inter regional and inter religious tensions became pronounced immediately after Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh were welded into a single political entity with full backing of the colonial power. As the Dogra rulers were fundamentally despotic, feudal and sectarian, the people of the State got alienated and fought a struggle against the Dogra domination which culminated in the termination of Dogra raj in 1947.[6] However, till date the Dogras did not compromise with this, what they regarded humiliation to their collective pride. It is not therefore, surprising that they harbour the dreams of carving out a separate state for Jammu and the anti-kashmiri sentiment has become a fertile ground for 'conflict entrepreneurs' of Hindutva forces. But this sentiment is restricted among the Hindu populated areas of the Jammu province. In fact, they demand sub-regional autonomy to safeguard their political, cultural and economic interests from the monopolistic political tradition—the aspiration reflected in the Autonomy Report of national Conference. However, same kind of situation is in Kashmir, where the political leaders both extremist and mainstream have totally failed to accommodate the minority aspirations of the other two regions and to form a single state. But rather, a hegomonistic attitude has followed by the Kashmiri leaders. This led to the alienation demands from other two regions- Jammu and Ladakh. From 1953, the regional demands from Jammu were in the form of abrogation of Article 370 and the slogan of "*Ek Pradhan, Ek Vidhan and Ek Nishan Nahi Chaleyga Nahi Chalega,*" the one president, one state and one symbol can not be tolerated in any how.[7] This voice has become louder since the eruption of land controversy over the Amarnath issue, in Jammu agitation sponsored by Hindutva forces in August 2009 while in Kashmir the Extremist groups take the stand and thus the two communities again got alienated. This agitation was a serious blow to the concept of Kashmiriyat. Again, over the issue of establishment of central university, again testified how much these regions are far from each other.[8]

Since 1980, especially after the agitation engineered by Ladakh Buddhist Association, the relationship between the two communities of Ladakh province namely Buddhists and Muslims suffered irreparable damage as the Muslims suffered huge economic losses besides the deep mental trauma. This is besides the fact that a tirade was already launched by the Ladakhi Buddhist elite against, what they like Jammu communalists called, Kashmiri domination. Not surprisingly they have been consistently demanding a union territory status for Ladakh. While with the full centre support the Buddhist Leh got a Hill Council in the 1995, the Muslim leadership of Kashmir balanced this act by granting the same privilege to Kargil though lately during Peoples Democratic Party leadership.[9]

While the Hindutva forces in Jammu and Ladakhi Buddhists in Ladakh and Kashmiri separatist groups like Hurriyat Conference, have become the stubborn adherents of identity politics rooted in religion and material interests, the hegemonic discourse in its inexorable urge to suppress the collective sentiment of Kashmiriyat followed the politics of denial and did not allow liberalism, democracy, liberty, rule of law and so on of the modern state to survive in Jammu and Kashmir. Yet the politics of conflict has taught a lesson both to the metropolitan political elite as well as the elite cartel operating at regional level. This is in addition to the international pressures on both state and non state actors to observe the norms of good governance and respect the human rights. But besides ensuring free and fair elections, the much more need is to integrate the fragmented political sub-cultures by multiparty coalition cabinet, informal advisory arrangements, inclusion of all distinctive population groups rather than all parties, autonomy at regional and sub-regional levels, proportionality in legislative representation, proportional appointments to the civil services, proportional allocation of public funds and above all by granting Kashmir its constitutionally privileged autonomous status.[10]

The political divergence has often become the basis of politicization by the political groups and organizations situated in the three regions of the state. Right from the time of state's accession in 1947, politics has been generated around the issue of Jammu's regional interest vis-à-vis Kashmir. The political discourse of regional discrimination and political deprivations claiming themselves has popularized the movements either for trifurcation of the state or for the demand for regional autonomy between these three regions. In this context of political divergence at the inter - regional level that makes the process of peace most challenging, especially at the internal level between the Govt. of India and the separatists of Kashmir.[11] The local sensitivities in this context assume importance because the issue of political divergence between the Jammu and Kashmir is highly compatible to peace process, initiated by the govt. of India takes cognizance of the need to involve the political leadership that claims to represent the people of the three regions because it is always the aggressive political articulations of regional politics during the last one and half decades resulted in the demand that the process of conflict resolution should be both inclusive and participatory - inclusive enough to provide an opportunity to the regional leadership to negotiate the regional interest. However, the complexity to the issue of peace and dialogue is provided not as much by the multiplicity of political voices as by their divergence from the Ladakh Buddhist Association, Bhartiya Janta Party, Jammu Mukti Morcha, Jammu State Morcha, Panun Kashmir, separatist leadership in Kashmir etc. It is in this context of political divergence that the idea of an intra - state dialogue has acquired prominence. This demand for an intra – state dialogue has not been raised only by the Jammu based political leaders who fear marginalization of their voices in the peace process but also by the kashmiri separatists who concede the possibility of failure of the process in the absence of an internal synchronization of political views.[12] Abdul Gani lone, the leader of the people's conference, was among the first separatist leaders who recognized the need to engage the voices outside the separatist politics to evolve a broad - based consensus towards the resolution of Kashmir problem. He had organized the first such meetings in Jammu where leaders across the political spectrum were invited to voice their opinion on the issue.[13]

However, the intra - state dialogue assumes importance in the context of the multiple identity politics within the state that has been sharped since accession. Beacuse maost of the such identity politics, operating in terms of "we" and "they" has constructed around polarity between different regions and sub - regions. Thus, it is not only the politics of *"Jammu versus Kashmir"* or *"Kashmir versus Ladakh"* that has been sharpened in the last few years, but also the politics of "Leh versus Kargil", *"Jammu versus Doda"* and *Jammu versus Poonch - Rajouri* etc.[14] The internal polarization that has taken place, consequently, has dangerous potential as it can give substance to divisive agendas. To nip such divisive tendencies in the bud, it becomes important to build bridges between the regions and sub - regions through the process of dialogue, otherwise it may generate tensions within the state. To overcome such diverse tendencies it becomes important to build bridges between the regions and sub – regions through the process of dialogue, in order avoid tensions within the state, number of formulas have been floated from time to time – like the *Regional Autonomy Formula* By National conference, *The Self Rule Proposal* By Peoples Democratic Party, *the Chenab Formula*, *Achievable Nationhood* by Sajad Gani Lone, the series of formulas offered by the U.S Based Kashmir Study Group, or the more recent Musharaf's Multi - Regional Formula. Besides, the internal demands of organizations like Jammu State Morcha and Ladakh Buddhist Association to reorganize the state by separating Jammu and Ladakh from Kashmir. But these formulas do not match with the ground realties and are not with harmony to the long-established socio- cultural identity aspirations of the region. That is why these formulas are not being taken very seriously at the local level.[15]

To conclude, it can be said that the regional analysis of the popular political aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir State is based on a "cause and effect" relationship. There is no consensus among the people living in different regions of the state with respect to their political future. They stand divided along the regional, religious and ethno lines. Considering the physical and social diversity of the state, its spatial and cultural ties with its neighbouring countries, any effort to make Jammu and Kashmir either an independent country or a part of Pakistan or a part of India will not be acceptable to the people of the state entirely.[16]

In order to find a permanent solution to the Kashmir crisis, the people of all regions need to be consulted by both the countries, to ascertain their regional aspirations. More importantly the people of the state need to be allowed to have an inter - ethnic, inter - religious and inter - regional dialogue to develop consensus to fulfill the mutually antagonistic political aspirations of the people living in different regions of the state. Hence, the need is to develop a democratic, federal, plural and non - centralized type of model that alone can ensure harmony among diverse identities of the state and make them a source of real strength and model for other states of India.[17]

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Kashmir's Socio-political Heritage

Mir Bashir Ahmad Sultan

(IBN-E-KASHFI)

Zara Zara hai Meray Kashmir ka Mehmaan Nawaz
Rastay kai patharoon nai day deya Panii mujhay

Brijnarain Chakbast

How hospitable is my Kashmir
Even the rocks and stones on the way
(offer you water to) quench your thrist

True, every inch of Kashmir has quenched the world's thirst. Every part of this land has a strange capacity of satiating every person of the world. The sons of the soil gave direction to the entire world and showed ways of living a happy life through the example. Welcoming every soul, who ever reached its mountain gates, in search of refuge, solace or academic pursuit, it offered its riches, material or non material, to satiate his want. They are the very gates of Kashmir from where no one has returned empty handed.

Spread over an area of 84,471 square miles, the Jammu and Kashmir State is situated between the Karakorams, the Hindukush and the Punjab plains. Although the population is only twelve millions, it is larger in area than a good number of independent countries. The dominant majority, according to the pre partition numeration stood at 32 lakh Muslims and 08 million are Hindus. The Muslims constitute 99 per cent in the Valley of Kashmir and the border areas, while in Jammu Province they are 61 per cent.

It is difficult to trace the first settlers on this piece of land, because, there is no authentic account of the ancient past. However, it appears that for a long time the valley of Kashmir remained devoid of any long lasting human habitation alluded to by the small settlements, known generally as Neolithic sites. The first visitors were probably the saints and recluses who believed in a secluded life for spiritual attainments. Since these types of

People are concerned only with prayers and meditation in caves and remote solitudes they can hardly be expected to establish a society. However with the passage of time and arrival of new entrants, followers of recluses, reshi's and herdsmen, became credited with having founded some settlements, monasteries and mathas which in course of time attracted students of religions and philosophy from far and near. It seems that the Sanskrit early became the medium of instruction. As a result, the valley became a centre of Sanskrit learning and by and by, with the influx of people who had devoted their lives to the service of the saints and scholars, some sort of permanent settlements sprang in the Valley.

We do not know much about the early institutions, secular or spiritual, which may have systematized the life of the people concerned but the evidences from traditional & non-traditional sources indicate a polity in harmony with nature.

It is only much latter towards the beginning of proto and historical period that the interests of power, be it economic or political, start showing up, creating little ripples or disturbances in the otherwise smooth life functions in Kashmir.

During the Buddhist period of Kashmir, scholars from the valley contributed, through example and production of learning material to the dissemination of knowledge and organization of life.

While in the mainland which included the portions of present day Pakistan, The various religious sects, faiths and denominations often engaged each other in the actual physical combatants, here in Kashmir the conflicts remained generally restricted to verbal duals only. Thus we see, Saivite & Buddhist scholars engaged in hair splitting arguments and helping thereby in the advance of learning which latter on achieved for Kashmir the epithet of *Srada Peeth*.

The presence of Aryans on the Indian scene changed much of the contemporary life around them. Mohenjodaro. Harappa, Kot Diji, Chanadaro gone; cities reduced, (remember Indra, the fort destroyer), aboriginals, indigenous population either denigrated or denounced as rakshas or subhumans or bound in slavery completes the Aryan domination. In order to legitimize their action and rule they created narratives (Vedic texts) & new mythologies. Aryans were warriors; they never compromised on issues or about their interests. This trait they always carried forward.

Aryans soon got divided into various interest groups. Those who held the politico- economic power tried to vanquish their less fortunate opponents. ***Mahabartha*** is one example; Carvakas and latter on Buddhists a couple more. Aryans or the believers in Vedas and Aryanikas; and Brahamanas never believed in Ahanisa. It was the antivedic Buddha's who believed in non-violence.

Kashmir Saivism emerged originally in response and answer to the ritual oriented late Buddhism and dogmatic caste bound rigid Brahmanism which made its way into Kashmir during the Gupta period. Kashmir Saivism rejected Vedic dogmas & ritualism and took the straight path which is non-dualistic, non-ritualistic and monastic. It advocates the primacy of consciousness which manifests the world which is otherwise transcendent. Kashmir Saivism rejected the idol worships and need for temples and strived for a casteless society. Though it soon lost its glory and purity to the uncouth tantric practioners it nevertheless paved the way for smooth arrival of mystics of Islam.

Kashmir, always remained uniquely related to India; the racial, social, Political, commercial and religious relationship between the two, only rarely, became exploitative or detrimental to the sovereign position of the valley. Men and ideas traveled across, opening new vistas and academic discourses. Yes, the power games continued to be played and commoners continued to be the sufferers but the mystic path declaring oneness of mankind never ceased to be tread .Mystics and Literatenures enriched both religious and secular writings. One cannot say that Muslim Sufi's merged easily with rishis of Kashmir, their must have existed some little anxieties, some minor clashes of egos, some misapprehensions due mainly to the lack of acquaintance with each other and verbal disputes. But over a period of time better acquaintances created an atmosphere of genuine understanding.[1]

The emergence of Muslim rule, Though continued with the basic structure of the polity and tax system helped in the establishment of the Law and order, which had long eluded Kashmir, because of weak rulers and internecine wars,and break up of the social fabric. Pertinent to mention is that the uncouth medicants, savage and self interested tantricists and the slaves of the bodily pleasures from ruling hierarchy had made during the last centuries of Hindu rule a mess of Saivism and Buddhism; Rulers like Deda Rani, Harsha, encouraged liberal sexual practices and orgies by their personal example.

Muslim rulers while creating, long lost political stability encouraged and patronized the saints and Rishis to establish their schools Khanqahas and mathas not only in Srinagar city but in the far flung areas also. The reputed royal historian of Zain-ul- Abidin,[2] was a saivite practioner who had his own matha. Another Scholar, associated with the court was Tilakacharya, a Buddhist. Zain-ul- Abidin bestowed land grants temples and scholarships to the scholars from minority community. He built mathas & Dharmsales.

Hindu rulers and scholars had for many centuries forgotten about the Kashmir calendar and the necessary rectifications it required to make it suitable for secular and religious needs. Sultan Shahabu-din engaged the experts in the field to re-fabricate and compile the Kashmir calendar on the lines of Old Persian calendar. This Kashmir calendar was a solar calendar and had 30 days a month needing the addition of five days a year called Intercalary days or Lud (in Kashmiri/ Persian).The loss of five days a year had created much confusion among the Hindu experts.[3]

More importantly, the Muslim rulers of Kashmir not only appreciated the local architecture but adapted it for various secular and religious purposes, of course after introducing certain important modifications into it. The true arch, mehrab, minaret, calligraphy the open octagonal or square towers known in Kashmir as *bangala* [4] are some of the innovations made under Muslim rulers. Laying of the gardens, arrangement of Terraces and management of water in cascades & fountains is credited to Muslim rulers particularly Mughuls. The first Mughul emperor Babur had already established a garden in the north of present day Kabul city called *Chaharbagh*.[5] The site of the famous Muslim shrine at Hazratbal was originally an entertainment place of emperor *Shah-Jehan*. The place was then known as *Ishratbagh*.

The social system in Kashmir was not different from that of Hindu-India. Here, it was the Muslim saints and divines who spent all their energies on eradicating the social disabilities from which various sections of the people had suffered under the retroactive social system for centuries. The social order that these leaders helped to evolve was based on the principle of equality of mankind. Their teachings infused a new spirit amongst the people. The old practice of forsaking the world and becoming recluses was replaced by a new zeal for life. The most prominent amongst these benefactors of Kashmir is the famous saint Shah-i-Hamadan who visited Kashmir in the 14th century A.D accompanied by 700 followers, all of whom were craftsmen and artisans besides being learned missionaries.[6] The Syed's visit revolutionized the social and political life in the Kashmiri. With the conversions to Islam on a mass scale through his spiritual influence, the new devotees of Islam gave up all previous concepts of life. The erstwhile yogis and recluses, who preferred to live in jungles and caves and avoided the hard facts of life, now, became artisans, craftsmen and scholars. The renowned Kashmir industries were all developed during this period of rule. With the development of the industries, trade and commerce flourished and the traditional Kashmir shawl found its way in the world markets. A large number of scholars and poets from Iran, Iraq and Central Asia, [7] the seats of Muslim Culture, came to Kashmir and made it their permanent home. The result was that a new culture and social order emerged, the dominant feature of which was equality and social justice.

During the Hindu period education was limited to the Brahmin class only. The first thing the Muslim saints attended to was extension of educational facilities to all citizens without any distinction. The result was that Sanskrit which was the language of Hindu scriptures and the monopoly of Brahmins was replaced by Persian. The people of Kashmir irrespective of their religion turned to Persian. Besides Muslims, Kashmir can boast of its numerous Hindu scholars, historians and poets who had remarkable command over this language which had penetrated deep into the new cultural life of the Kashmiris. Even the script was replaced. Iranian art and language tremendously influenced the literature. This cultural admixture further strengthened the new social structure. So great was the cultural integration that a few years earlier it would have been difficult for an outsider to distinguish between a Muslim and a Hindu. The beard, the round turban, the long gown-like shirt, the pajama and the piece of cloth over the shoulders became the common dress of both Muslims and Hindus. But over a period of time better acquaintances created an atmosphere of genuine understanding.

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Yet another Muslim influence is the change of diet amongst Hindus. Hindus of Kashmir were always meat eaters. The method of cooking is the same as in Iran, Afghanistan and other Muslim countries. Even the utensils are of Iranian pattern. Hindu and Muslims alike use a *samovar* for making tea. But Hindus don't use Tin coated copper utensils. They use other metal alloys instead.

Every aspect of life reflects Muslim and Iranian culture, so much so, that Kashmir is also known as 'Little Iran'.

At the end of my paper I would like to read the verse of a famous poet which is quiet befitting to the situation prevailing in the Kashmir i.e.

Aaj who Kashmir hai majboor o makhoor o aseer
Kal jisay Ehlay nazar kahteey thay Iran-e-Sagheer.

Its English rendering is:

"Today that Kashmir is helpless and salve
To whom yesterday the enlightened people used to call mini-Persia".

The writer is well versed, seasoned and versatile journalist, having more than forty years of experience in the journalism.

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Kashmir Resolution: An Analysis Of The Impediments.

KASHMIR PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Aftab Ahmad Khan

INTRODUCTION

The political turmoil in the state of Jammu and Kashmir since 1990 has dominated the political scene of India and Pakistan at all diplomatic and domestic levels. Pakistan's attempt to regulate a proxy war in Kashmir was of course an interventionist and muddling recourse causing frustration and resentments. This promoted a mind-set for war and at a particular point of time two neighbours began sharpening the edges of their weapon with nuclear warheads. The situation day by day was looming South Asia into senseless entropy. However, US penetration in the regional power structure particularly after Sept. 11. 2001 transformed the distribution of power of Asia to her advantage. New power alignment consequently diminished the impending war preparation between the rival power centers that had the urge to resort to unconventional means to approach the problem. Again the substantial US penetration in the regional power structure visibly changed the political scenario vis-a vis the mindset of the political elite of two countries who in the changed situation expressed a wish to resort to peaceful approach to Kashmir problem. This was anticipated as an appropriate strategy to nullify or neutralize the impending US belligerence in the region of unequal powers. This was a device to invalidate rising opportunities to US belligerence for future manipulative intrusions in the area through Kashmir dispute. The new thinking in its ultimate expression offered an opportunity to the people of the state also to develop their own strategy and opinion. In the changed scenario any solution to the dispute is not easy in presence of divergent perception parties which envisage complications and problems of a different magnitude. In the process, both activated diplomatic circles to affect and win over the other at domestic and on international level.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this paper is to delve upon the impediments in the way of resolution which are classified as under;

1. An urge among few but potent political elites of both countries to prolong the problem with the help of diplomatic maneuvering. These elite classes are interested to maintain the legacy of perpetual confrontation. They always explore the means to gain ascendancy over the other.
2. Opinion of the people in J & K State is fragmented into the number of options owing to the presence of pro-India, Pro-Pak and Pro-Kashmir sentiments. Consequently, a viable local leadership, who could negotiate with great assertion, discretion and acceptability, is altogether absent from the scene.
3. Presences of huge military and militant and militant cadre's with persistent intelligence network support make a resolution a difficult task.

Hypothesis

Dispute, among the three parties having diverse interests to protect, is non-negotiable, though conversion of two parties with identical objectives into one, leads to a plausible solution.

SURVEY

A wide range of literature highlights dissimilar magnitude of Indo-Pak dispute over the state of Jammu and Kashmir. A part of the literature is either defending Indian or Pakistani perspective or narrating the Politico-diplomatic experiences of the policy makers at the helm of affairs. A section of the literature is also available depicting the war experiences. Besides, a portion of the analysis is also available on the diplomatic tussle between the two in the international arena. In addition; some studies examine the political scenario in the Jammu and Kashmir since 1990. Furthermore, studies are also presented to scrutinize the role of the Huriyat Conference, a local political amalgamation of various political parties that groomed after the eruption of militancy. However, there is a dearth of the material on the problems and prospects for a fresh resolution of the Kashmir dispute involving the agreement of all the three parties i.e, India, Pakistan and Kashmiri masses.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in the study of the impediments is purely analytical. The personnel prejudices are highly minimised with a help of standard techniques developed for the purpose to provide a realistic and pragmatic picture. Much stress has been laid on the ground situation and on the behavior of the players on the scene.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

1. Maneuvering Perpetual Confrontation

The Indo-Pak relation since 1947 is the story of mutual aggrandizements and perpetual adversary. It was founded on the bitter experience of the partition of India. Which at times reflected the fanaticism of religious mindset particularly of the Muslim League and Hindu fanatics. Bothe patronized the division of India in order to sustain the future political institutions in the sub-continent. Pakistan on the one end propagated religious sentiments to boost the morale of its army and legitimized its political institution. Presently the proxy war/ cross border terrorism in Kashmir extended up to the main lands of India is also based on the same mindset. Indian leadership on the other even if divorced from the religious fanatic cadres by a substitution of Nehruian model of governance could not exclusively escape from the fanatic mindset of the section of Indian society. The religious ethos in India is so deep that Nehruian model for administrative purposes had to use, at time its umbrella. The major sections of Indian society, though relegions in general orientation hardly act on its dictates. People's voting behavior reflects the true mind set of people who generally and often vote for economic development. But because of Pakistan factor, and partition legacies, people, guided by the parties who could not perform well at elections against the programmes of congress and began to rouse the baser religious sentiments, often acted against the secular principles of the country, democratic experiment in India witnessed mal-governance particularly during one-party rule (Congress rule from 1947 to 1979 and Indra jee's emergency phase). Country appeared to go into fragments and strong tendency towards regionalism surfaced thereby posing a direct threat to the unity of India itself. The one alternative which got currency was the reunification of country through Hindu religious sentiment where parties the off shoots of Hindu Mahasabha like BJP, Jan Sang, VHP etc, etc played a considerable role in regaining the unity of this county. Thus, religious sentiments play an important role in fermenting the mindset and the integrity of the political institutions in both countries. Religious sentiment proved a favourite theme for religious elites in both the countries to manage powerful penetration/influence in the national decision making processes at all levels i,e, political, economic, social and military. The sentiment for unity also has been framed in the backyards of traditional rivalry based on fanatics and deep rooted desperation. It's off shoots nurtured and nourished a natural tendency to oppose each other at every nook and corner. Thus all diplomatic endeavours since 1947 have been made to win ascendancy with a view to enhance the image by a spectacular display of prominence in an arrogant mood over the other.

In this background, supremacy over and occupation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir since 1947 was also part of the political agenda of the both countries. The political alliance of J & K with Indian union is understood to be conditional, governed by article 370 of the constitution. Pakistan by a strategum found part of the state on its side-dividing peoples of J and K state and creating sufferings and misries for the whole nation JK situation became a sentimental affair between the two on both domestic and international level. It not only caused two major wars in the sub-continent it prevented progress and prosperity and the interaction of civil society of Islamabad-New Delhi. Besides, it damaged all sensible efforts to establish consistency in the friendly relations. This conventional conceptual framework of animosity got undue currency in the bi-lateral ties and inadvertently unfolded innate opposition that provided an opportunity to a religious elite to propagate the mindset of perpetual resentment against each other in a sturdy way. From time to time political systems were legitimized on the sentiments provoking the hard-line approach. The national army, internal security, and defenses of the countries were justified under these titles. Political elite of this mindset aired anti-India and anti-Pak propaganda in the respective countries in a way to make it a question of survival. This elite in a potential way entered into the power corridors of the both countries by substantiating provocative religious sentiments among the masses and in power corridors i,e. if Jahadees/Militants were manufactured by religious clergy in Pakistan, simultaneously section of Indians uphold Shiv-Shena and the Bajrang-Dal, manifesting the same mindset. The survival of these politico-religious guardians in the sub-continent deepened hard thereby prolonging the antagonistic predisposition only. In India, the politico-religious guardians managed to capture the highest political post (Janta Party rule in India) and in Pakistan Jamati-Islami never supported the grooming of a broad based democratic set-up founded on the wider concept of participation and decentralization of political power. It instead supported the military institutions of the country to preserve the concept of traditional rivalry with India. This mindset was so powerful that it caused covert absenteeism to Tashkent, Simla and the Agra summit (The Tashkent Agreement could not provide any fundamental departure in the relations and Simla Agreement in the long run proved only a tactical concord for the return of the prisoners of war and the mechanism to avoid the UN and superpower intervention in the bi-lateral affairs. The similar mindset retrained supremacy in the Agra Summit between Masharaf-Vajpayee). Hence all the meetings and summits between the two since 1947 to Agra proved to be a mere diplomatic verbiage and a raison d'être to defend traditional postures. Thus, a persistent urge exists among few but potent political elites of both countries to prolong the Kashmir dispute in order to save their positions in the decision-making mechanism. Their presence in the corridors of power, incline all diplomatic exchanges into a manoeuvre to maintain the legacy of perpetual confrontation and signaling of was like dispositions against each in the South Asia. Infact, these political elite always explore the means to gain ascendancy against the other. Therefore, there is an impending need to change or to push to the wall this type of mindset before searching for a durable solution. Infact, the new international situation together with a distant position of South Asia in the present global situation Kashmir provides for both India and Pakistan a chance to come close in the 21st century where as US is otherwise ready to exploit both India and Pakistan for its own economic ascendancy.

2. Pro-Indian, Pro-Pak and Pro-Kashmir sentiment: An Impediment.

Other important impediment in the way of resolution is the fulfillment of the Kashmiri aspiration. It of course, puts forth a daring challenge to the Indo-Pak leadership. The whole scenario hinges in the Kashmir resolution. Up to now public opinion in J&K State is fragmented into the number of options owing to the presence of Pro-Indian, Pro-Pak and Pro-Kashmir sentiments. The aid and support to the biased local leadership is not articulating a plausible way-out. Consequently, both India's and Pakistan's leadership has to create congenial and viable conditions for the emergence of a unbiased local leadership who could accurately project the local aspirations apart from the views of the local political elite who either subscribe Pro-Pak outlook. This unbiased leadership is to be recognized by the both so that it could negotiate with great assertion and discretion for widely accepted resolution after accommodating two important adversaries who are eternal parties to the dispute. In brief India and Pakistan has also to exercise a restraint and adopt a considerate version of their respective stands on Kashmir vis-à-vis people of the state also has to venture for a conciliatory and plausible approach in accommodating India and Pakistan's aspirations with regard to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The new mindset if articulated can promote an authentic process in the direction of peace, vision, and tranquility. The opinion in the state, the political leadership of the two countries and the attitude among the cross sections of the civil society now-a-days sail in the same direction. Above all, the traditional elites of rival conceptual mindset in both the countries are now compelled by the nature of new international and domestic complications to anticipate a similar approach. This has manifested in the statements of this elite, for example on the eve of the Pakistan visit, Mr.Vajpayee recited the poetry of Allama Iqbal, a national poet of Pakistan and Mr. Advani, the chief exponent of "Hinduvata" declared Mohammad Ali Jennah (the founder of Pakistan) a person with "secular" credentials. The tendency to rethinking and appeasement is evident owing to the huge US military presence in the region and of the impending consequences of terrorism and mal-governance at the domestic level. Simultaneously Jamat-i-Islamia of Pakistan is now-a-days considerably supportive in improving productive bi-lateral relations with India on friendly footings together with the resolution of Kashmir issue. Thus it is a high time for the peace seekers and the sensible leadership to resolve the age old disputes and to start an era of tranquility and fraternity in the South Asia.

3. Concentration of Huge Military/Militant & Intelligence Network Cadre's: An Impediment

The third disturbing impediment in the visualization of durable resolution about Kashmir is the presence of huge military, militant and intelligence network cadre's. The formidable offensive or defensive strategies with a profound surveillance mechanism against each other persistently damage the peace initiatives of the civil society. Up to now the leadership in both countries have publicized great enthusiasm in the reduction of military and militant actions and exhibited a great interest in the free flow of Kashmiri's to the Indian and Pakistan's side of Kashmir in order to help, promote ideal and reasonably profound thinking to the resolutions. This infact is paving the way to forge greater accommodation of each other's aspirations. Still more is to be articulated in order to minimize the human rights-violation and to imagine a situation ideally suited to the peace process, dialogue and understanding of diverse perspectives. The spectacular display of military and nuclear deterrents always shadowed all the sincere efforts for peace initiatives in to non-compromise and non-cognisance of each other's bona fides. Consequently it sparks unending arms race at the cost of the public prosperity. However, upto now india displayed a sense of restraint for sparking unending arms race in the South Asia which of course is a healthy sign for the promotion of peaceful adventures.

CONCLUSION

Kashmir dispute infact involves three parties purporting three diverse options. The respective parties defended their options with great zeal. Distant and divers imaginations persist among the concernd parties for the resolution of the dispute. The self-imagined resolutions were preached and propagated at large in the world community with a view to win the outside support. All this was done to sustain on's postures and to nullify or neutralize the adversary. The potent advocacy of self-designed declarations up to now has not accomplished a resolutions leading to a permanent settlement of Kashmir dispute. Actually, any dispute among the three parties who protect diverse interests culminated into the non-cognisance and non-negotiable exercises. The persistent ideology of non-recognition of each other's viewpoint day by day disturbs its sway. But the Indian is finding it hard to locate the genuine representatives from Pakistan. The way Pakistan emerged and subsequent events happened to it make the task of arriving at an acceptable solution more difficult.

Presently Pakistan is not in a position to sustain a meaningful solution to the dispute but the circumstantial and identical thinking by the nature of its style, meaningfully stimulate a mindset for the resolution of Kashmir issue. Therefore, hypothesis adopted seem authentic, as both India & Pakistan with identical objectives joined hands to undertake a plausible resolution acceptable to the masses of Kashmir.

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Kashmir Will Become The Focus Of Asiatic Civilization

Fida Hassnaian

Among people of various races there is a tradition of a catastrophic flood in about 4000 B.C. When the whole world was submerged under water when very large continents of Lemuria and Atlantis broke away into smaller continents. Many lands and many people sank into the water, never to rise again. The *Old Testament* of the Hebrews tells us that it rained heavily for forty days and forty nights and destroyed every living substance from off the face of the earth. We do have a legend about the great flood in the Greek mythology. At the same time, we do have an account of the gigantic flood in the *Vedas*, the *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavata Purana*. In Hindu mythology, Manu is regarded as the progenitor of the human race, because it was he, who got built boats to protect the seeds of life and carried these ships towards the Himalayas. The same story is described in *Mahavansa*, the *Vinaya* and the *Mular Sarvastivadi* sect of Buddhists. In the *Nilamata Purana* of Nila Naga of Kashmira, Barahadeshiva mentions the destruction of the world by the Great Flood at the end of *Manvantarata*, the preservation of the seeds of life in a boat by Manu and the birth of the land of Kashmira out of the lake of sati. It is clear that in the Hindu *Puranas*, Noah of old Testament is named as Manu. After the Great flood subsided some lands started emerging out of water and the valley of Kashmir was the first land to emerge. It is for this reason that the Japanese scholar Ottashi Hideyoki referrers to Kashmir as the 'Mother of Earth'.

From the above, it is apparent that there were human beings on earth, who experienced this catastrophic flood and after survival preserved for us the story of this great tragedy. Fortunately, the *Nilamata Purana* mentions, the clans of the Nages and the *Pishachas*, living in Kashmir before the Noah's or Manu's flood. During the flood, city of Sandmat Nagar, sank down deep forming a new lake, about five miles broad and twelve miles long. During the reign of Sultan Zain-al-abidin (1420-1470) people could even see peaks and pinnacles of temples and palaces in the blue water of this lake. Now, when scientists have found a link between the surface of the Black Sea and the 'Biblical Flood' by finding shells of the fresh water, they must now turn their attention to the submerged city of Sandmat Nagar in the Wular Lake, in Kashmir.

THE STAR OF DAVID:

At first, the Hill of Sharika, emerged out of the waters of Noah's flood and then emerged other *Krewas* and *Uddars* of the Kashmir Valley. According to the *Sharika Mahatmaya*, the goddess Durga in the shape of a Sharika bird carried the hill in its beak and threw it on Jaloodbhava. Since then the hill has been known as the Hill of Sharika and is worshiped by the Kashmiri Pandits. She is represented in the mystical diagram of six-pointed star, known as *Sri-Chakra*. The first triangle pointing upwards of Shakti and the second triangle pointing downwards is that of Shiva. Both the triangles are conjoined, so as to manifest the powers of creation, sustenance and destruction. Among the Hebrews this sacred conjoined triangle is known as the Star of David and is the present insignia of Israel. It is worth recording that the *Sri-Chakra* is in reality the Star of David used as a Jewish symbol. What connection the Jews have the Kashmirs?

Judaism is one among the most ancient and great religions of the world. Its history started with the *Hebrew* people of Ur, when their leader Abram. Later called Abraham, set his face against paganism and proclaimed oneness of God. These peoples were settled in Canaan (Palestine) by Moses, and are known as Jews.

Mahmood of Gaznah led two attacks on Kashmir in 1015 and 1021 but failed. In order to know the kingdom of Kashmir, he deputed a great scholar, Abu Rihan Al-Beruni to Kashmir. He knew Persian. Sanakrit and Arabic, and stayed at Sharda in Kashmir for two years. Later he compiled a great work in Arabic known as *Kitab-ul-Hind*. Which has been translated into English. In this highly researched work, he writes:

They are particularly anxious about the natural strength of their country, and therefore take always much care to keep strong hold upon the entrances and roads leading into it. In consequence, it is very difficult to have any commerce with them. In former times they used to allow one or two foreigners to enter their country, particularly Jews but at present they do not allow any Hindus whom they do not know personally to enter much less other people.

Many European scholars have referred to the Jewish origin of the Kashmiris. It was Babar the first Mughal Emperor of India, who made mention of the *Kash* or *Cush* a Hebrew tribe who gave a name to the Valley. This very Kassite Tribe founded the village of Kash near Bagdad in Iraq, named the river Kashen in Mesopotamia, and founded Kashmir near Nisapur in Iran. In Central Asia, the towns founded by this tribe are; Kashmir, Kash near Bokhara, Kashania near Samarkand and ofcourse, the world famous Kashgar. The leader of this tribe is known in Kashmir as Kashuapa, who also founded the settlement of Kashtwar.

Our Kashmiri historians, Khawaja Mohammad Azam Deedamari in his *Tarikh-i-Azami* Pandit Hargopal Koul in his *Guldast-i-Kashmir*, Abdul Qadir in his *Hashmat-i-Kashmir* and Hassan in *Tarikh Auliya-i-Kashmir* have made mention of the tomb of Moses at Booth on Nebu Baal in Bandipur, Kashmir. This is further collaborated in other historical works like *Tarikh-i-Khaleel. Wajeez-ul-Tawarikh*, and *Nigaristan-i-Kashmir.*

ANTIQUITY OF KASHMIR:

According to the Hebrew sources, it were the sons of Noah, who inhabited the world and according to the Hindu sources, it were the sons of Manu, who were the progenitors of the human race. In Kashmir, the water people or the boat people called *Hanjis* are the remnants of the Noah's progeny. It is evident that Kashmir is the first land to emerge out of water after the Great Flood and in Kashmir we still see people from the bloodline of Noah. This explains the antiquity of Kashmir as compared to other regions of South Asia.

The earliest references to the Valley of Kashmir are contained in the Greek classics of Ptolemy, Hekataios, and Herodotos. The Chinese have also referred to Kashmir and there are clear references to the Valley in the Annals of the Han Dynasty.

The inhabitants are skillful at decorative work engraving

> *and the art of inlay at building residences at weaving and at patterned embroidery. They are fond of wine and food. There are many household. Individuals and persons able to bear arms and it is a large state.*

The Annuls of the Han dynasty of China were written between 125 B.C and 25 A.D and are known as the Hanshu. These annuls contain information about the Kashmiris prior to the advent of the Christian era. It is given in these Annuls that Kashmir is a larger state, which implies Greater Kashmir when some parts of the Punjab and Sind, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Tibet were parts of the Kashmiri Kingdom. We are further informed that the Kashmiris are skilled at decorative work. They are good builders. We are informed that here are many households, individuals and persons in Kashmir who can bear arms and use them. This shows that prior to the advent of the Christian era, the Kashmiris could use arms and ammunition. We are told that some of the rules of the Han Dynasty had deputed their envoys to Kashmir with presents and gifts.

It is not Chinese, who have mentioned Kashmir in their writings but the Greeks too speak of Kashmir. According to the celebrated geographer, Ptolemy, the territories of Kashmir extended to the greater parts of Punjab, Himachal and the North-Western parts of India. Our ancient sources like the *Rajatarnagini* speaks about the Lalitaditya as a universal monarch who passed his whole life in expeditions to distant lands. His army subdued the ruler's upto the Gar on one side and the eastern parts of Afghanistan on the other side. It is historical fact that it was he who created a defensive front against the approaching Arabs. Had the rulers of the region accepted his initiative the history of the Sub-continent as well as Central Asia would have been different today. The Arabic works of Al-Masudi, Al-Qazwini, Al-Idrisi and Al-Beruni also contain references to the Valley of Kashmir. The Arab geographers speak of Kashmir as a *Buzurg* or great country divided it in outer *Qashmeer* and inner *Qashmeer*. The last terms has been used by them to the Valley and the first term they used for Greater Kashmir, which included the neighboring countries, which were part of the Kingdom of Kashmir.

THE FOURTEEN TRIBES:

The fourteen tribes, which have lived in Kashmir, according to the

Nilamata Purana, are the Nages, Pishachas, darvas, Abhisaras, Tunganas, Mandaves, Madras, Antergivis, Bhirgirs and the Yavanas. It is evident that the Greek, Persian, Perthians, Scythians and the Kassites have been foremost in exercising control over the Kashmir. It is Kassite tribe, who were termed as Khashas in the *Nilmata Purana,* who called themselves as *Koshur* people and who gave the name of *Kasheer* to the Valley.

Excavations conducted at Burzahom have revealed that the earliest inhabitants of the valley were cave-dwellers or pit-dwellers. It was in about 3300 B.C. that the people of Kashmir chose the various *Krewas* or uplands for their residential purposes. The ancient site has yielded a large number of beings and stone tools, in the shape of harpoons, needles, arrow-heads, spear heads, axes, chisels etc. of unusual interest are the burials of human beings and animals so far located in the habitation chambers. The excavations also revealed the first ever found rock found painting, depicting a hunting scene during day, illuminated by the two shining Suns, which is perhaps the earliest specimen of primitive art in Kashmir.

During the 6th century B.C.E the Achaemenian monarchy rose to power in Persia, Afghanistan and other regions of the Northern India under the leadership of Cyrus the great. The Valley of Kashmir, which formed a part of Gandhara, came under the influence of the Bactrian's, Scythians and the Parthian. Alexander the Great marched his armies into India in the beginning of 326 B.C.E After his departure many small Greek chief doms arose in the north Western regions of India Demetrius became the ruler of a big kingdom which included Kashmir also.

Among the Greek Scythian, Parthian and Bactrian rulers, whose coins have been located in the Valley are Diodotus, Euthydemos, Eukratides Apollodotus, Menandrou. Antimachos Nikephoros, Hippostratus, Lysias, Hermaeus, Azes, Azilies, Vonones, Spalagadamas, Spalirises, and Maues, Gondapharus, Abdagases, and Zioneses. It was Menandrou, who after having been defeated by Naga-sena in a religious discussion, became a Buddhist, it was during the Greek period that the cultural traditions of Roman Byzantium, Syria and Persia traveled to the Valley and its influence can be traced in the archaeological style of the Sun temple of Martanda. Similar foreign influences can be traced in the constructional style of Takhat-i-Sulaiman, and the terracottas of Harwan, Ushkar and Akhnur.

The Yu-echi tribes of the Kansu region in China occupied Gandhara in about 177 B.C.E and they are known as the Kushanas. Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini* provides historical evidence he three Kushana rulers, Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka, who ruled over Kashmir in about the first century, C.E. and founded many towns, Viharas and Buddhist stupas in the Valley.

THE WHEEL OF TRUTH:

Kanishka, the famous Kushana king of North India, convened his 4th Buddhist Council in Kashmir in about 78 C.E. it was a great event in the early history of Buddhism. Taranatha, the Tibetain Buddhist scholar has stated that this Council was held at Kuvana in Kashmir, in which 500 *Arhatas*. 500 *Boddhi-Sattavas*. And 500 *Panditas* compiled two treatises, known as Kashmir in the Chinese Annula. It goes to the credit of this Council to have compiled the sacred words of the great master, Buddha, covering the subjects such as brotherhood, love,-compassion and mercy. This greater code, like that of Humarabi, consisting of 300,000 verses, which was engraved on copper plates was deposited in a Vihara specially constructed for this purpose in Kashmir. Kaniska, issued gold, silver, and copper coins commemorating the great event, with the monogram bearing the Greeco-Bactrian legend: *BODDO* about Buddha. It is of great historical interest that among his coins, Greeco-Bactrain legends about Jesus Christ *Uieska, Uuezo, Uezu* and *Uzu* have also been discovered. These copper plates are the greatest national treasure of the Kashmiris, which when found is sure to influence human thought and culture.

This new and progressive orientation brought about by the Kashmiri Buddhist is known as the Mahayana Buddhism. It was introduced into Central Asia by Vairochana, a foremost Kashmiri *Boddhi-Sattava*, who built the first Buddhist *Vihara* at Khotan. Another renowned Buddhist missionary Kumarajiva, who was born at Chandigam in Lolab, introduced the Mahayana in China in about 217 B.C.E. It was another Kashmiri Buddhist missionary named Gunaravarmana, who made the Mahayana, popular in Java and Sumatra. Borneo and Bali

One of famous Gilgit manuscripts, *Bhaisajaya-Guru-Sutra*, which was edited and published by the author is one of the popular in the temple of Yakusiji in Japan.

THE SECOND COMING:

Robert Clark, a figure among the earliest Christian missionaries in Kashmir. Wrote in 1864 that the Valley was remarkably fitted by its geographical position, by its salubrious climate and by its beauty and fertility, to become a great Christian Missionary Centre for the vast countries of Tibet, China, Yarkand, Afghanistan and Turkistan which lie around it. The above statement depicts the importance of Kashmir to the Christian world. However it is amazing that one of our ancient Sanskrit works. The ***Bhavishya-Maha-Purana*** makes mention of the visit by the Son of the God (***Ishvara-Putram***) to Kashmir and his talk with Raja Shalivahana of Kashmir. This famous ***Purana*** was composed by ***Suta*** in 3191 ***Laukika*** era which corresponds to 115 C.E. It will be interesting to quote one or two sentences from his long conversation with the king:

O. King! I hail from the land far away:
Where there is no truth, and evil know no limit.
I appeared in the Maleecha country and I suffered at their hands.
I am known as Ishvara Pularam (the son of God)
Born of Kanya-Garban the virgin
I ask human beinghs to serve the lord
The lord God is in the centre of the Sun and the elements.
And God and the Sun are forever,
Bliss giving Lord being always in my heart
My name has been established Isha-Mase.

There are numerous references in Chinese, Tibetain, Persian and Sanskrit works about Jesus having visited Glastonbury, Egypt, Iran Kashgar, Kashmir, Gujrat, Sri Lanka, Orissa, Nepal, Tibet and Ladakh. But the following references by the famous Kashmiri historian Mullah Nadir Very significant.

> During this period. Hazrat Yuza Asaph having come from the Holy Land to the Holy Valley proclaimed his ministry. He devoted his days and nights in prayers, and having attained the highest status in spiritual hierarchy declared himself as the Prophet sent to Kashmiris. I have seen in a work of Hindus that this Prophet was really Hazrat Isa the spirit of God who had assumed the name of Yuzu-Asaph in

Kashmir.

This establishes a lovely connection between Jesus Christ and Kashmir. It was for these very reasons that Dr, Wolf in his Mission to Bokhara, which was compiled in 1832 wrote:

> I would like to see whole colonies of English artists, men of science and literature and divines, proceeding to Cashmere.

The tomb of Yuzu-Asaph, known as Rozabal in Srinagar has been described by the Kashmiri historians, as that of a prophet, who came to Kashmir from a foreign land. Is Jesus Christ and Yuzu-Asaph the same person is being investigated by research scholars and several works have came up for serious consideration.

MADINA-TUS-SANI:

Hazratbal in Shahar in Kashmir is called Medina-tus-Sani or the second Madina, after the second holy city of Islam.

New evidence has come to our knowledge to show that the Glorious Prophet did depute his emissary with a letter for Veeneditya, the noble king of Kashmir. This historic event is given in detail in a Persian manuscript. ***Anwar-i-Kashmir*** folio 61 ***Riaz-ul-Hind*** by ***Hidayat-ullah*** Bangali ***Musalmanan-i-Hind*** by Mirza Sikandar Khan Shirazi. There is a clear reference to this event in ***Marasilla-Kashmiri Pallditan***, Allahabad dated 30th June 1872.

Kashmir is a blessed land, where we have a very sacred and precious relic, the holy hair of the Glorious Prophet. The ***Tarikh-Auliya-i-Kashmir*** by Pir Ghulam Hassan Shah Khuihami informs us as to how this precious relic reached Bijapur in India: how it was purchased by Khawaja Noor-uddin Ishabari of Kashmir and how Aurangzeb (1657-1708) tried to stop its onward shift to Kashmir. This holy relic which is our national heritage is exhibited to the public, six times annually from the Hazratbal mosque. In 1964 when some unknown conspirators tried to steal this holy relic, an upheaval occurred in Kashmir. All people Irrespective of cast, creed and colour, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs came out of their homes on the streets beating their breasts in protest for 21 days. The State government was changed and precious relic was restored to its original place in the Hazratbal mosque.

Islam made its headway into Kashmir through the efforts of the Muslim travellers, soldiers, scholars and saints, who visited the Valley in the 8th century C.E. It was Brahamaraja, who invited the seven Muslim princes for an invasion of Kashmir. Harsha appointed Muslims in his army and they enjoyed great influence on him. There are many indications in the *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, which show Harsha's leanings towards Islam. But it goes to the credit of Gyalpo Rinchina (1320-1323) the last Buddhist ruler of Kashmir, to have brought Islam to the masses by his voluntary conversion at the hands of a fakir, Hazrat Bulbul Shah Qalandar whose tomb at Bulbul Lankar has become our national heritage. It was Islam which completed the process of the blending of various cultures in the Valley.

KASHMIRIAT:

During The Period of the Karkotas, Kashmir development a humanistic philosophy of its own, known as the Kashmir Saivism. The Agamas which gives a description of dialogues between Shiva and Parvati, were compiled with suitable interpretations by Somananda in the 8th century. Utpaladeve and Abhinavagupta further developed them with detailed commentaries like Ishvara Praysbhijna and the famed Tantraloka. The Kashmirian scholars worked out a monistic philosophy which is quite distinct the Advaita Vedanta. They taught that phenomenal existence though transitory in nature was not unreal and manifested in its phenomenal aspect. It continues to be what it has been eternally, the limitless all inclusive; blissful and external consciousness.

The period of the Sultanate, from the beginning of the fourteen century to the end of the 16th century is a golden period of national glory in the history of Kashmir. It was a period when the valley of Kashmir had its own rulers. During Sultan Shihab-ud-din's reign, the Kashmiris extended the boundaries of India right upto Gazni, Qandhar, and Badakshan 33 Sultan Zain-ul-abidin (1420-1470) was undoubtedly the greater ruler in the history of Kashmir for having ushered benevolent rule for the people. Due to our love and affection for him, we still call him Badshah or the great king. He was honoured with the appellation of *Narayanavtara* by the Kashmiris. During the Sultanate, the Kashmiris evolved a new humanistic philosophy known as the Rishi Order, founded by the great patron saint of Kashmir, Hazrat Sheikh Noor-ud-din Wali. These Sufis played an important role as preachers of love, justice, social reform and Islam. These Rishis, who belonged to various faiths, were the harbingers of secularism, world brotherhood and peace and it's due to them that the Kashmiris have remarried tolerant in their outlook and behavior throughout the centuries. This trait of the Kashmiris has been named as the Kashmiriat.

THE HEART OF ASIA:

Central Asia has always been one of the most important regions of our world, culturally, historically and politically. Since ancient times, China, Persia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, and India has taken an active interest in this region. We in Kashmir have a special interest in Central Asia because we are closer to it than South Asia. It is important to note here that Islam made its headway into Kashmir, not from the land of its origin, but from Central Asia. It was Brahmaraja, who invited the seven Turk princes for an attack on Kashmir. Subsequently, Harsha the famous king of Kashmir came under the influence of the Islamic culture from Central Asia. It was Muslim missionaries from Central Asia who popularized Islam in Kashmir. In this connection mention may be made of the famous savants like Mir Syed Ali Hamdani and Mir Syed Mohamad Hamdani, both from Central Asia, who introduced Islamic culture and thoughts in the valley of Kashmir. We had given the Buddhist culture and thought to Central Asia in the first century and it gave us back the same culture movement in the shape of progressive Islam. Two of our greatest rulers, Lalitaditya and Shihab-ud-din extended their away over certain parts of Central Asia. It was Zain-ul-abidin, who important Central Asian arts and crafts into Kashmir for which the Valley has become famous throughout the world. Arts and craft like, paper making, papier-machi, carpet weaving, wood carving, Namda making, and other crafts were imported into Kashmir from Central Asia. We even borrowed their music and even instruments. Sufi though penetrated into Kashmir from Central Asia. Thus it is evident that Central Asia has not only influenced Kashmir in religious thought but has expanded its arts and crafts into Kashmir.

THE SILK ROAD:

Before the discovery of sea and sir routes, the Silk Road functioned as the main connection link between the East and the West. Starting from

Sian in China, the Silk Road passed through Pamir, Sinkiang, Afghanistan, Iran, and Mesopotamia, Iraq Palestine. It touched the famous cities of Khotan, Yarkand Gilgit, Srinagar, Kabul, Samarkand,Kundos, Meri, Hamdan, Damascus, Tripole and Alexanderia. Due to the flourishing trade via the Silk Road, numerous trade and culture centers emerged on this route and led to the movement of ideas and thoughts. This Asian highway also encouraged spread of knowledge and science right into the Roman world. In fact medicine, science mathematics was introduced from the East into West, through this road.

It cannot be denied that due to its central location, Kashmir development a splendid culture of its own. It borrowed much from China, Iran, Mesopotamia and India.

Historically and geographically, Kashmir has been associated with Central Asia, since ancient times. There are close affinities and resemblances between the cultures of the two regions. In fact archaeological discoveries have indicated a common culture trends, antiquity whereof may go back to 4th millennium B.C. Ancient trade routes between Kashmir and Central Asia and existence of Srinagar on the Silk Road reveals that there has been a continuous reciprocal transmission of ideas, philosophical, culture and religious movements and historical and political connections and relations between the people. Besides Central Asia forms an area, whose culture and traditions have influenced our thought and culture? It is for reason that Kashmir has been described as the Heart of Asia.

SWITZERLAND OF THE EAST:

The Valley is also known as the 'Switzerland of the East'. Hassan Khuihami (d. 1898) the famous Kashmiri historian describes special qualities of Kashmir. According to him the Valley is an attractive garden which the ancient scholars considered superior to the rest of the world. Among the fifteen special qualities of Kashmir, he gives preference to its moderate climate which is pleasant clean healthy and invigorating. It is a land of gardens, forests, meadows, springs and lakes. Its snow bound mountains have many meadows which provide recreation to the visitors. In 1665 Bonier wrote:

> The whole kingdom wears the appearance of the fertile and highly cultivated garden. Meadows and vineyards, fields of

> rice hymn saffron and many sorts of vegetables among which are intermingled trenches tilled water. Rivulets, canals and several small lakes vary the enchanting scene. The whole ground is enameled with our European flowers and plants and covered with apple, pear, palm apricot and walnut trees and bearing fruit in great abundance.

The 'Switzerland of the East has become the *sine qua non* of the visitors and travelers from across the globe. Vigne who about one hundred and seventy five years back was right when he said:

> "Kashmir will become the sine quo non of the oriental traveler or a resting place whence he may start again for still more distant lands".

Darvish Rahim also tells me the same thing. When he says that Kashmir belongs to none but the whole mankind and all are welcome here, to spend their holidays and then depart. Some may come for *muraqaba* or meditation, while others may come to re-charge their batteries.

According to the *Puranas* the Valley of Kashmir is a place of recreation of the gods who dwelt here. According to a Buddhist Sutra, its lush green forests are suitable for the meditating monks. This Valley is known as *Rishi Vari* garden of the Rishis. Many have come here to obtain *Shakti- Pat* or enlightenment. Shiva came with his consort on *Shivratri* to the cave now known as Sri Amarnatha in Pahalgam Kashmir. Mullah Ahmad the Kashmiri historian says that the Prophet King Solomon flew in his aircraft which rested on the *Takht-i-Sulaiman* Eric Von Daniken the world famous author on UFO has given details about the space-craft of the Hebrew Prophet, Ezekiel having visited the *sancto-sanctrum,* in the middle of the Sun Temple at Mattan Kashmir where the two genies, Haroot and Maroot are imprisoned in a well.

THE KASHMIRIS:

While describing Kashmir, the Annals of the Han dynasty in China state that "*there are many households, individuals and persons who are able to bear Arnos and it is a large state".* Prior to Kanishka, a Kashmir Buddhist ruler, Menandrou ruled over the whole of North Western India including Southern Afghanistan. Kanishka, who convened the 4th Buddhist

Council in Kashmir in the fifth century 2nd century ruled over a vast region in South Asia form Kabul to Kanuj, including Afghanistan, Sind and Tibet. Another great Kashmiri King, Lilitaditya who is known as *Mu-to-pi* in the Chinese Annals, and Mutai, by the Arabs, was the most powerful ruler in the 8th century. He holds sway over Tibet, fact is that he was afraid of Tibetans and requested for Chinese to help him against their rising ambitions. Badakshai, Afghanistan, Sind and Northern India upto Kanuj. He built the capital of India at Parihasapu in Kashmir.

Sultan Mahmud of Gaznah invaded India seventeen times and humbled the rulers of the Punjab, Ajmer, Kanauj and Delhi. During that period, Kashmir was ruled by an illustrious queen, Didda who faced the eleventh invasion of Sultan Mahmud on Kashmir. Out of all his invasions, he suffered a defeat at the hands of Kashmiris. In order to avenge against his defeat he led a second expedition against Kashmir in about 1022 AD. At this time, Mahmud made full preparation and collected nearly 20 thousand soldiers to supplement his regular army. He gave a call of *Jehad* or holy war against the Kashmiri infidels Fida seems to creat his own myths. Otherwise these is no historical edidence for the contentions he makes. This time also he had eat the humble pie and returned to Gazhah as a frustrated looter.

Through Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin was not fond of military exploits, he would not tolerate weakening of the Kashmiri Sultanate. When the Sultan of Kashgar taking advantage of the turmoil in Kashmir, wrested Ladakh from Kashmir, the Kashmiri army under the command of Mohammad Magray, routed the Kashghari forces and its ruler had to accept the suzerainty of Zain-ul-Abdin.

Babar, who is the founder of the Mughal Empire in India, deputed his armies for the conquest of Kashmir but the invaders were defeated. Another Mughal, Haider Dughlat Kashgari, attacked Kashmir with a huge army and occupied it for nearly 10 years, during which the Kashmiris had to suffer arson, loot and fire. The Kashmiris later joined hands to expel this looter who had committed mass atrocities in Kashmir. They killed him along with his Mughal soldiers. In order to give a warning to the Mughals, the Kashmiris built a minar of the Skulls of the fallen Mughal soldiers at Hanzvira. The Venician physician, Manouchi had this defeat of the Mughals in view, when he described the Kashmiris in these words:

"The very people who inhabit the delightful country have

> rice hymn saffron and many sorts of vegetables among which are intermingled trenches tilled water. Rivulets, canals and several small lakes vary the enchanting scene. The whole ground is enameled with our European flowers and plants and covered with apple, pear, palm apricot and walnut trees and bearing fruit in great abundance.

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"The very people who inhabit the delightful country have

> nothing of the effeminacy and slothfulness of the Indians. They are robust and laborious, exercised tilling their lands and very brave in war".

Where did this bravery of the Kashmiris go after their subjugation by the Mughal King Akbar. According to one author, the Kashmiris were vanquished and re- vanquished by the invaders like the Mughals, the Afghans and Sikhs and the Dogras, "who murdered, oppressed, and enslaved their ancestors and grounded the life and heart out of them that their better selves have been crushed." The Kashmiris have been defiled during domination and that is the rest reason that they have forgotten their tales of velour, courage and bravery. The famous poet of Kashmir, Majhoor addresses the Kashmiris:

Let there be an earthquake!
Let thunder rumble!
Let there be born another Tazi Butt!

Kashmir has the distinction of being the only region in South Asia to possess a recorded of history of 5000 years. Despite oppression for hundreds of years, Kashmir has not died, but has emerged again and again. It is destined to find a dignified place in the community of nations. Keeping in view, our glorious past, our great traditions of head and heart and through the acquisition of knowledge, science and honest toil, we are destined to make our dear homeland Kashmir, a bridge of love between central Asia and South Asia.

In 1842, Vigne made a prophecy about Kashmir, saying that Kashmir will become the focus of Asiatic civilization, a miniature England in the heart of Asia. Khawaja Khizar known elsewhere as the Lord of Seas, often visits the Wular Lake in Kashmir. Once, when famous poet, Iqbal saw him there, he wrote this verse

Hamaala kay cheshmay obultay hein kab tak
Khizar souchta hay Wullar kay kinaray!

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Sufism, Rishiism In Kashmir Interaction And Impact

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Introduction – Sufism, Islamic mysticism that began to develop in the 7th century, the first century of Islam. The term Sufi (Arabic: "mantle or wool wearing Person") was coined in the early 9th century as an appellation for mystics whose ascetic practices included wearing coarse woolen garments, or *sufu the term soon referred to* all mystics, whether or not they followed ascetic practices. Sufism arose out of various influences, among them are more significant the a mystical overtone in some of the teachings of Muhammad, the founder of Islam; sufism was an intellectual response social and political decisions of the later caliphs which made the life for general masses miserable.

By the 9th century CE the Sufis claimed to have methods of finding mystic knowledge of God, or Allah. The Sufi mystic, described as a pilgrim on a journey, follows a path of seven stages: repentance, abstinence, renunciation, poverty, patience, truth in God, and acquiescence to the will of God. Then, with the grace of God, a higher level of consciousness is attained, in which knowledge, the knower, and the known are realized as one. Some mystics believed that the supreme experience of union with God could not be expressed in words; others who tried to express it scandalized the orthodox by ecstatically proclaiming their identity with God. Eventually, formal pantheistic doctrines merged; statements that the universe and God are actually one further outraged the orthodox, who believed that God, as creator of the world, transcends it. In addition, although most early Sufis conscientiously observed the religious law, some scorned it outright, proclaiming their inner light a sufficient source of religious guidance.

In the late 11th and early 12th centuries, the Islamic philosopher and theologian al-Ghazzali finally reconciled the orthodox to mysticism. He de-emphasized the pantheistic aspects of Sufism, maintaining, on the one hand, that the individual should strive to attain the Divine Presence, but, on the other hand, that the good Sufi must live in peace with the rest of the community. The Islamic community accepted his interpretation of Islam, which stressed the personal, emotional relationship of the individual to God, within a century after his death. Sufism then became a' vital force, winning over many more people, especially in western Asia, to orthodox Islam. In the 8th century Sufi monastic communities were founded where devotees practiced mystical exercises. In the middle Ages the great Sufi orders, which had several million adherents, were established; about 100 orders still exist, many of them in Iran. One of the most influential founders of order was the Persian poet Jalal-al-Din Mohammed Rumi, who, in addition to composing poetry and other works, instituted devotional dances, particularly those of the whirling dervishes, his disciples, called the order of the Malawiya (in Arabic), or Mevlevi (in Turkish), with their headquarters at Konya, Turkey. In addition to the members of these orders, many wandering Sufi mendicants, or *fakirs*, have appeared over the centuries. Many have been genuinely pious, but those who were merely fraudulent beggars brought disrepute to Sufism. From the Middle Ages onward, Sufism influenced many poets, especially in Persia (later Iran), where the most brilliant poetry has been associated or expressive of Sufi thought and practice.

Before dealing with the spread of Sufism in Kashmir, let me clear some of the confusions of people about Sufism on the bases of the statements of the stalwart Islamic scholars ranging from Imam Abu Hanifah to

> "If it were not for two years, I would have perished. "He said, "for two years I accompanied Sayyidina Jafar as-Sadiq and I acquired the spiritual knowledge that made me a Gnostic in the Way."
>
> *Abu Hanifah (85H. – 150H)*
>
> "whoever studies Jurisprudence [tafaqaha] and didn't study Sufism [tasawwaf] will be corrupted; and whoever studied Sufism and didn't study Jurisprudence will become a heretic; and whoever combined both will reach the Truth."
>
> *Imam Malik (95 H. – 179 H.)*

"I accompanied the Sufi people and received from them three knowledges: ...how to speak; how to treat people with leniency and a soft heart ... and they ... guided me in the ways of Sufism."

Imam Shafi'I (150-205 AH.)

"O my son, you have to sit with the People of Sufism, because they are like a fountain of knowledge and they keep the Remembrance of Allah in their hearts they are the ascetic and they have the most spiritual power."

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (164-241 AH.)

"I knew verily that Sufis are the seekers in Allah's Way, and their conduct is the best conduct, and their way is the best way, and their manners are the most sanctified. They have cleaned their hearts from other than Allah and they have made them as pathways for rivers to run, receiving knowledge of the Divine Presence."

Imam Ghazzali (450-505 AH.)

"The way of Sufis for seeking Knowledge, is to disconnect themselves from this worldly life, and they keep themselves constantly busy with Dhikrullah, in an all their actions and behaviours."

Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi (544-606 AH)

"The specifications of the Way of the Sufis are ... to keep the Presence of Allah in your heart in public and in private; to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (s) ... to be happy with what Allah gave you..."

Imam Nawawi (620-676 AH.)

Mawlana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi.

Ibn Taymiyyah (661-728 AH) is considered generally one of the staunch opponents of Sufism. But it must be noted that he was just the opponent of innovative sects and deviant individuals of Sufism as such. He has been included among the Sufis by Maulana Ali Mian. Ibn Taimiyah says for example at one place about Sufism, "Tasawwuf has realities and states of experience which they talk about in their science. Some of it is that the Sufi is that one who purifies himself from anything which distracts him from the remembrance of Allah and who will be so filled up with knowledge of the heart and knowledge of the mind to the point that the value of gold and stones will be the same to him. And Tasawwuf is safeguarding the precious meanings and leaving behind the call to fame and vanity in order to reach the state of Truthfulness, because the best of humans after the prophets are the Siddiqeen, as Allah mentioned them in the verse:

> "(And all who obey Allah and the Apostle) are in the company of those on whom is the grace of Allah: of the prophets, the sincere lovers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous; Ah! What a beautiful fellowship." *(an-Nisa', 69, 70)*

"... some people criticized Sufiyya and Tasawwuf and they said they were innovators, out of the Sunnah, but the truth is they are striving in Allah's obedience *[mujtahidin fi ta'at-illahi]*, as others of Allah's People strove in Allah's obedience. So from them you will find the Foremost in Nearness by virtue of his striving *[as-saabiq ul-muqarrab bi hasab ijtihadihi]*. And some of them are from the People of the Right hand *[Ahl al-Yameen* mentioned in Qur'an in Sura *Waqi'ah]*, but slower in their progress... And this is the origin of Tasawwuf. And after that origin, it has been spread and 'tasha'abat wa tanawa'at] has its main line and its branches.

> "The way of the Sufis is the way of the Salaf, the preceding Scholars between the Sahaba and tabi'een of those who followed good guidance..."
>
> *Ibn Khaldun (733-808 AH.)*
>
> "may Allah praise them [the Sufis] and greet them and may Allah cause us to be with them in paradise. Too many things have been said about them and too many ignorant people have said things which are not related to them. And the truth is that those people left the world and were busy with worship ... They are the People of Allah, whose supplications and prayer Allah accepts and by means of whom Allah supports human beings"
>
> *Tajuddin as-Subki (727-771 AH.)*
>
> "At-Tasawwuf in itself is the best and most honorable knowledge. It explains how to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (s) and to put aside innovation."
>
> *Jalaluddin as-Suyuti (849-911 AH.)*

"We can witness the greatness of the people of Sufism, in the eyes of the earliest generations of Muslims by what has been mentioned by Sufyan ath-Thawri (d.161 AH), one of the greatest imams of the second century and one of the foremost legal scholars. He said, "If it had not been for Abu Hisham as-Sufi (d.115) I would never have perceived the action of the subtlest forms of hypocrisy in the self-Among the best of people is the Sufi learned in jurisprudence."

Ibn Qayyim (691-751AH)

"My father Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and I do not deny or criticize the science of Sufism, but on the contrary we support it, because it purifies the external and the internal of the hidden sins, which are related to the heart and to the outward form. Even though the individual might externally be on the right way, internally he might be on the wrong way. Sufism is necessary to correct it."

Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1115 – 1201 AH.)

"Tasawwuf appeared in the first century of Islam and it received a tremendous honor. It purified the self and straigtened the conduct and gave knowledge to people form the Wisdom and Secrets of the Divine Presence."

Muhammad 'Abduh (1265 – 1323 AH.)

"These Sufis were initiating people on Oneness and sincerity in following the Sunnah of the Prophet (s) and to repent from their sins and to be away from every disobedience of Allah 'Azza wa Jall. Their guides were encouraging them to move in the way of perfect ***Love to Allah 'Azza wa Jall.***

Maulana Abul Hasan 'Ali an-Nadawi (1331 AHb.)

"... In Calcutta India, everyday more than 1000 people were taking initiation into Sufism. "... by the influence of these Sufi people, thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands in India found their Lord and reached a state of Perfection through the Islamic religion."

"Sufism is a reality whose signs are the love of Allah and the love of the Prophet (saw), where one absents oneself for their sake, and one is annihilated from anything other than

> them, and it is to know how to follow the footsteps of the Prophet(s)...Tasawwuf searched for the sincerity in the heart and the purity in the intention and the trustworthiness in obedience in an individual's actions."
>
> *Maulana Abul 'Ala Maudoodi (1321-1399 AH.)*
>
> "The Divine law and Sufism: "Sufism and Shariah: what is the similitude of the two? They are like the body and the soul. The body is the external knowledge, the Divine Law, and the spirit is the internal knowledge."

The history of Sufism in Kashmir is spread over a long period of time starting from Bulbul Shah to the Sufi poets. Sufi saints are still inspiring people of Kashmir by their subtle mystical insights. The Suharwardi, Naqashbandi and Qadri Sufi Orders have also played a very great role in the process of Islamisation of Kashmir. The localized Rishi version of Sufi teachings, and a central figure in this regard was Shaykh Nor-ud-din, popularly known as Nund Reshi who took this process to its logical conclusion. Islam came to Kashmir from Central Asia and later on was accommodated within the Kashmir ethos, which was shaped by diverse factors over a large period of time. The local people of Kashmir received the infleneces from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism. Even the Sufis had imbibed some elements, which were considered anti-Shariat by some authors. For example, Mirza Haider laments about the un-Islamic and anti-Shari'at ways of Sufi's."[1]

Moreover, the secularization process started with the coming of the Sufis from other parts of Islamic world. According to G.M.D. Sufi:

> "...These Syeds and their followers seem to have stimulated the tendency to mysticism for which Buddhism and Vedantism had already paved the way[2]".

Another author says,

> "Popular saint singers, became the apostles of a synthesis and rapprochement, aided by common points in Advaita and Sufism[3]".

But it should not be misconstructed by this fact that the role of Islam was marginalized and overshadowed by the local influences, as the problem of Sufism is to be viewed always in its global perspective, and Kashmir was not an exception to it. Since the Suharwardi, Naqashbandi, Qadiria, Kubarawi and Rishi schools of Sufi through flourished side by side in Kashmir, the inteplay of various foreign and local elements in the flouring of Kashmir mysticism can easily be discerned.

Sufism came to Kashmir after the emergence of Khanqahs and Silsilas had taken form at various places in the Islamic world. Though almost simultaneously with the foundation of Muslim rule in Kashmir (720/1320), Sufism was introduced there. Still there are evidences that Islam had made its inroads long before the establishment of Muslim rule in Kashmir. But there is no doubt that the systematic and well-organized Sufi activities began only towards the end of the fourteenth century. Hence forward Sufis like Saiyid Ali Hamadani, Mir Muhammad, Saiyid Jaamaluddin Bukhari and Saiyid Ismail Shami began to enter Kashmir in quick succession. One important ideological framework, which can be discerned running through the all activities of foreign and local Sufis and mystics in Kashmir, was based mainly on the works of Ibn 'Arabi and the Kashmiri Sufi's seem to have taken little notice of Shaykh Aloud-Din Simani's criticism of *Wahdat-al-Wajud* of Ibn Arabi." A different trend, which emerged after the coming of the Sufis from Persia and Central Asia, was the crude synchronized form of it, which came to force with the development of an indigenous Sufi order known as the Rishism[4]

To start with let us take a close view of some Sufi stalwarts. Much research work has been done on the Kubarawi and Rishi mystical movements of Kashmir.

The monumental works of Prof. M. Ishaq Khan, titled as *Kashmir's Transition to Islam – The Role of Muslim Rishis*" (published by Manahor Publication Delhi, 1994, and 1999,1) *Sufism in Kashmir* of Prof. A.Q. Rafiqi, (Bharitiya Publishing House, new Delhi) are the books in point[5].

Therefore, I have confined my attention to lesser – known history of Sufism in Kashmir. The role of Sufis belonging to the Suharwardi, Naqashbandi and Qadiri orders has been elucidated in the following pages.

Sayyid Sharfuddin 'Abdur Rahman, (d. 1327 CE), popularly known as Bulbul Shah, was given the title of Bilal because his extreme love of the Prophet. He was the disciple of the Suharwardi Sufi, Shah Nimatullah Wali Farsi. Bulbul Shah succeeded in attracting to islam Rinchen Shah (1324 CE), who was instrumental in popularizing Islam in Kashmir, Parimu Says:

> "By sheer accident or manipulation, it so happened that Rinchana's eyes fell on Bulbul Shah, a Muslim fakir, so he became a Muslaim and adopted the name Sultan Sadruddin".[6]

It is said that after Rinchen came to the throne, he held discussions with both Hindu and Buddhist priests, in order to ascertain truth but none could satisfy him. Finally, he decided to accept the religion of the first person that he should see the next morning. That person was Balbul Shah, a Suharwardi Saint, who at that time was offering prayers near the royal palace. Rinchen immediately went to him, and after inquiring about his religion, accepted Islam[7].

Thus Bulbul Shah, the first Suharwardi Sufi, was able to convert Rinchen to Islam apart from some 10,000 converts, including Rawanchandra, the brother-in-law of Rinchan. Rinchen, in turn, granted the revenues of certain villages to Bulbul Shah for his maintenance and also built a Khanqah for him near his own palace[8].

Attached to the Khanqah was a large Langer-khanah (kitchen) known as Bulbul Lankar, where the poor were fed free of cost twice a day[9]?

A mosque was also built near the hospice by Rinchen, (Sadruddin, the new name given to him by Bulbul Shah), where he offered congregational prayers at appointed times. Though scholars Rinchen's conversion to Islam, to political reasons",[10] but the real motive behind the conversion seems to be spiritual yearning of the king rather the political expediency.[11]

Thus the first Suhrawardi Sufi, of whom we have any record to have entered Kashmir, was Bulbul Shah, who by converting the king, increased the prestige of Islam and led to the acceptance of the new faith by some of the nobles and, according to one tradition, by 10,000 inhabitants of the Valley[12].

Bulbul Shah led a life of complete self-abnegation and preached against superstitions and charlatans widely prevalent amongst the Kashmir's of his period. He helped the poor, and showed immense love towards the down trodden.

During the regin of Sultan Zainul Abidin (1420-70), another Suharwardi saint, Saiyid Muhammad Isfahani, (or Rifai, b. 735/ 840) arrived in Kashmir. He was the disciple of Sayid Jalaluddin Bukhari of

Uch, popularly called Makhdumin Jahaniyan (1308-84). Sayyid Muhammad lived a life of retirement. He first took up his residence in Srinagar and later on entered the village of Khanpur (Baramullah). Since he applied himself to the most austere spiritual exercises, he is known as Janbaz (one who stakes his life)[13].

It is said that he came to Kashmir with about 150 saints and entered into Kashmir, from Shopian in A.H 827 (1421 CE). He was very fond of providing food to the poor from his Langar; the place where he stayed was called Khanpur, meaning a place of eating". He established a preaching centre in Baramullah and constructed a mosque and an Eid-gah as well.

The other Suharwardi Sufis who came to Kashmir are:

Saiyid Ahmad Kirmani. He came to Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Nazuk Shah (1529-30, 1540-52). A Khanqah was built for him at Narwara, in Srinagar and an annual grant was assigned to it from the State revenue for the maintenance of his Langar. Among his disciples was Baba Masaud, popularly known as Narwar Sahib". Another important Suharwardi Sufi was Sheikh Hamza Makhdum? Sheikh Hamza was born in (900/1494) at Tujar, near Sopore Saiyid Jamaluddin, before his departure from Kashmir, gave the Shaikh authority to enroll disciples into the Suharwardi order. Sheikh Hamza considered the Zikr (remembrance of the name of God) to be medicine for the ailment of the heart on the one hand and strongly disapproved of Sama (mystical music) on the other. Shaykh Hamza is popularly known in Kashmir as Mahbubul Alam (beloved of the world). He died in 984/1576. He was buried on the slope of Koh-i-Maran in Srinagar, where in his lifetime he used to spend long hours in meditation[14].

Makhdum Hamza called upon people to lead a virtuous life, pay the religious taxes and acquire knowledge[15]. Among the disciplines of Sheikh Hama are Baba Dawud Khaki, Maulana Shamsu-Din Pal, Khwaja Ishaq Qari, Khwaja Hasan Qari and Baba Haidar Tulmuli. Of these the most distinguished was Baba dawud Khaki. (D.1585 A.D)[16] He is author of a number of books like *Dastur-u-Salikin*, *Virdul-Murddin*, *Qasida-I-Jalaliyya* etc; Baba Daud was an outstanding poet as well.

Baba Daud approved of *Sama*, which was denounced by his teacher Shaykh Hamza and the other Shrawardi Sufis. He argued that *Sama*, stimulates love when heard within the limits prescribed by the Sufi masters[17]. He upheld Zikr-I-Qalbi (in ward remembrance of God), and believed that the latter was meant for beginners alone[18]. Like, the Suharwardi, Sufis, he believed that the renouncement of the world did not mean that one should go naked or wear a *Longota*, (the narrow strip of cloth). Renunciation in fact demands nothing but sincerity on the part of the devotee; wealth in itself was no obstacle to the mystical path[19].

The Naqashbandi order was introduced in Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Sikander (1389-1413). It made its presence felt with the advent of Khwaja Mahmud towards the close of the sixteenth century[20]. However it was Saiyid Hilal (d.861/1457) who introduced Naqushbandi order in Kashmir. Saiyid Hilal left only one disciple, named Mir Saiyid Amin, popularly known in Kashmir as Wusi-Sahib. He led a life of retirement at Asham. After the death of Saiyid Hilal, Saiyid Amin moved to Srinagar and confined himself to a room near Koh-i-Maran. Saiyid Amin seems to be an ardent advocate of the doctrine of Wahdatu-Wujud (Unity of Being). Some of his verses seem very pertinent to be quoted. For example,

> "The world and the man of the world one endowed with the essence of the Eternal, if you look deeply (you) will find everything in the human being".

He says further, "The entire Universe is with me. My abode is beyond *lamakan* (space-less world). O' *alim* (religious scholar)! My body is (itself) a universe. Know! The soul of universe is my soul[21]".

He was a broad-minded Sufi, above all religious prejudices. He says, "Do not scorn infidelity of those who have found out truth, it is not different from faith". Again he says, "To an arif (Gnostic) the difference between the mosque and temple are meaningless. Men endowed with spiritual eminence, find both good and even identical". About the mystical union with God, he says, "I want visal, (union). I do not want either this world or the other. I worship God; I do not worship houses or walls". He was killed in 1484 along with his fifteen members of the family. He was later buried at 'Alikadal[22].

Another Naqashbandi saint was Khwaja Mahmud (d.1642). He did not stay in Kashmir for a long period and soon left for Agra. However, in the seventeenth century, he made several visits to Kashmir, and helped in the popularization of Naqashbandi order in Kashmir[23]. The impact of Shaykh was reflected on the Sufis of Kashmir also. For example, Shaykh Murad Teng was the disciple of Shaykh Abdul Ahad Sarhindi Faruqi, who was the son of Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindi. Apart from this influence, he imbibed impact from Muhamad Yousuf Kawsa, Mulla Abdullah, Khwaja Muhammad Naqashbandi etc[24].

Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi came to Kashmir and Sheikh Murad went to Sarhind along with his peer in 1081 AH and returned back to Kashmir after getting complete Sufi training and the letter of authority to initiate others in the order of the Sufis he belonged to. Among his illustrious disciples was Khwaja Azam Deedahmari, who is a famous Kashmiri historian. He remained in the company of his Shaykh for twelve years. Among the novices of Shaykh Murad were other people like Khwaja Sayyid Sharif, who died in 1114 A.H[25].

Sayyid Nimatullah Shah Qadri introduced the Qadiri order in Kashmir in the second half of the sixteenth century. Before coming to Kashmir, he was living in India, where he was a disciple of Shaykh Muhammad Dervesh Qadiri, Saiyid Nimatullah did not stay long in Kashmir and soon left for India. Among his disciples in Kashmir was Shaykh Mirk Mir. He was the son of one Saiyid Shamsu'd-din Andrabi, whose ancestors had migrated to Kashmir from Andrab, Khurasan Iran, in the reign of Sultan Sikander, Shayk Mirak Mir spent most of his time in meditation at a Khanqah in Srinagar, known as Khanqah-i-Andrabi. He died in 1582 A.D, and was buried at Mallaratta in Srinagar. Another Qadri saint, who came to Kashmir in 1581 A.H. from somewhere in Indian, was Saiyid Ismail Shami. He did not stay long in Kashmir and returned to India, but during his brief stay there, he firmly laid the foundation of the Qadiri order. His disciple Mir Nazuk Niyazi did not approve of the practice of Sama, unlike the first Qadiri saint in Kashmir, Sayyid Nimatullah. He died in 1614 CE and was buried at Qazi Kadal in Srinagar. His eldest son took up Mir Nazuk's Khanqah at Khanyar, in Srinagar. Mir Yousuf (d.1617) who was initiated to the Qadri order by his father, Mir Muhammad Ali (d.1660 CE), the third son of Mir Nazuk, popularized the Qadiri order in Kashmir[26].

Apart from the above Qadri Saints, mention may be made of Mulla Shah Badakshani, stayed in Kashmir for more than 22 years. He was among the disciples of Main Mir Qadri. In this way Suharwardi, Naqashbandi and Qadri saints were very important Sufi orders, which influenced Kashmir in several ways and prepared the way for the Sufiistic interpretation of Islam, which was the hallmark of the Kubarawi and Rishi Silsilahs (orders) of Kashmir.

The *Wahdat-al-Wajud* (unity of Being) philosophy was advocated by almost all Sufis, which has several resemblances with Hindu Vedanta darshan. Even the famous 'Kubarawi, Sufi Sayyid Ali Hamadani (1314-1384) was an ardent advocate of the same philosophy. Although Sayyid Ali's teacher Allaudin Simnan was fiercely opposed to the theory of *Wahdat-al-Wajud*... he wrote a tract in defense of the Wujudi doctrine, entitled as "*Risala-I-Wujudiyya*".He wrote two commentaries on Ibn Arabi's acclaimed "*Fusus-al-Hikam*". According to Farooq Bukhari, Sayyid Ali was the first to introduce Ibn Arabi's thoughts in South Asia.

The word Rishi is of Sanskrit origin. In its pre-Islamic sense it refers to wandering ascetic who had renounced the world, taking refuge in caves in the mountains or in the forests, and who sought to commune with the Divine through the practice of stern austerities[27].

According to Prof. Mohammed Ishaq Khan the term Rishi is undoubtedly of Sanskrit provenance 'a singer of hymns, an inspired personages to whom these hymns were revealed, and such an expression as 'the Rishi says 'is equivalent to 'so it stands in the sacred text is in common usage among the Hindus, however, the Rishi meant 'a saint or sanctified sage... an ascetic, anchorite[28]...

Scholarly opinion is divided regarding the origins of the Rishis. Saqi writes that their genesis can be traced to the Aryans before their invasion of India. He opines that Rishis existed among the ancient Zoroastrians of Persia as well as among the pre-Vedic inhabitants of the Indus valley civilization. He writes further that the Kashmiris are divided into 199 gotras or lineages, each of which claims descent from a particular Vedic Rishi[29].

According to Pushp, the Rishis of the Vedic period were not world-renouncing mendicants, but the latter changed in the Upanishadic period, when Rishis set up ashrams in the forests He writes that these ashrams later turned into Buddhist Viharas where shramans or monks lived and from where they roamed the country side engaging in social service. It was under the Buddhist influence that in the period of Brahminical revivalism in Kashmir the Rishis sought to crusade against the oppression of the Brahmans[30]. Pushp says that Kashmiri Rishism as we know it today must be traced to the Buddhist period and not to either Saivism or Vaishnavism[31].

It seems that Rishism had struck strong roots in Kashmir prior to the advent of Islam in the region, and probably one reason for its popularity was the distinct strain of protest Brahminical supremacy that is evident in some of the practices and teachings associated with the pre-Islamic Rishis. However, the anti-caste crusade was most forcefully articulated by the founder of the Muslim Rishi order, Hazrat Nur-ud-Din Nurani[32]. The founder of Rishi movement of Kashmir, Shaykh Nur-ud-Din (d 1440 CE) also adopts the *Wujudi* trend of Philosophy, in the fourteenth century. He says, for example, "After abandoning myself, I found the Being (Mujud). And he says further.

> "I looked for my benevolent God with an undivided mind, and lo! recognized the reality of my own self". And he also says,
>
> "Oh fool! Why do you want to waste your life in seclusion? Learn self-introspection and talk to God, Who is within you[33]".

In his earlier life Nur-ud-Din, the verses composed by him especially in the cave "bear an indelible influence of Shavite philosophy". For example he says:-

Having forsaken all, sought you,
While searching You the prime of my youth passed away,
When I found You within my own self
I remained in safely because of Your luminations.

According to Prof. Khan the typical matter of the "Siavite way of renunciation" can be seen conspicuosly present in the following verse of the Sheikh:

He is near me I am near Him
I found solace in His nearness
In vain did I seek Him elsewhere?
Lo! Found the Beloved within my own consciousness.

In the same manner while the Shaykh establishing a personal relation between himself and personal and incarnate god, through ascetic training", remarks:-

The universe is the objective manifestation of the essence of Siava
If you realise it through annihilation of self, you will get merged into Him
What will you find after death, if you do not recognize Him in this

world?
Search Him in yourself (and) give me keen hearing[34].

However though there are "elements" in the verses of the Shaykh that may be called "compatible with the Siavite aspiration after self-identification with God, "It should be noted that the influence of "ontological monism of Sufis on his inquisitive mind cannot be ruled out[35]"

He does not draw "formal and verbal parallels between Hindu and Muslim idea of unitive experience, but he fully elaborates the spirit that animates the mystical movements in Hinduism and Islam". For example he says:-

What qualities hast thou found in the world?
To allow thy body a free, loose rope?
The Musalman and Hindu sail in the same boat
Have they play and lets us go home.[36]

Sheikh sometimes transcends the barriers of "theological ethnocentrism" and says:

Among the brothers of the same parents
Why did you create a barrier?
Muslims and Hindus are one
When will God be kind to His servants?

He shows an inspiration of both Hindu and Muslim sources in his fervent desire to have the vision of the transcendent yet immanent God.

Nirguna manifest thyself unto me
Thy name (alone) have I been chanting.
Lord! Help me to reach the acme of my spiritual desires.
I do remember (with gratitude) how kind Thou art,
Thou removed all veils between thy self and the prophet
And Thou revealed Quran unto him.
Lord the one (Prophet) who remained steadfast in Thy way,
I do remember with gratitude; how kind Thou art.

Several hagiological works have mentioned what is very significant for a researcher here is the close association between Nur-ud-Din and Lal Ded or Laleshwari. This intimate spiritual relation between Lal Ded and

Shaykh Nur-ud-Din has been explicitly discussed in the folklore traditions as well as by the prominent historians as well. For example it is said that for days after the birth of Nur-ud-Din in 119/1379 A.D., he did not take milk from his mother. But, then Lal Ded visited the house of Salar Ganai, the father of the newly born and addressed him as:-

> "you were not ashamed by being born; why then are you ashamed of sucking (at the mother's breast[38]."

It is said that the baby started taking milk and thereafter Lal Ded's visits to the house of Nur-ud-Din were quite frequent. When this Local tradition is combined with the verses of the Shaykh, which pertain to Lal Ded, the debt of the former to the latter can easily be acknowledged and we can also consider Lal Ded "the earliest source of inspiration for Nur-ud-Din[39]."

For example, in one of his verses, the Shaikh acknowledges his debt to Lal Ded when he says:-

"Tas Padman purchi Lalay
Yam Gallay Amrit Chawu...."

i.e., That Lalla of Padmaanpore who had drunk the fill of nectar; she was an avatar of ours, O God grant me the same spiritual power (as bestowed on Lalla!)[40]

Here Prof. Khan has brought to fore a very important point to our notice when he says that history cannot be objective or even complete if historians totally reject the evidence about their so-called legendary, figures. He says:-

"We have no strong reason to regard the Shaikh as a peddler of myths: on the contrary, we find in his person a mystic with an unerring sense of history... In fact, the Sheik's verses not only embody ad enact the age-old forms of rural culture, but they are a major source of discovery and creation. In a society where the learned Brahmans did not deem it necessary to record the activities of the ascetics as, for that matter, even such luminaries of the Valley as Abhinavagupta and Lal Ded in their works, memory must have been the only vehicle of integrity and continuity. It may be in this context that Sheikh Nur-ud-Din has treated the 'legendary Rishis, like Zulka, Miran, Rum, Pilas etc., in the same category in order of merit as the established Sufis like Uways-i-Qarani[41]. Thus he sought to legitimize the term Rishi by emphasizing its Islamic origin. He says for example:

"The first Rishi was the prophet Muhammad.
The second in order was Hazrat Uwaya,
The third Rishi was Zulka Rishi,
The fourth in order was Hazrat Miran,
And the fifth Rishi was Rum Rishi
The sixth in order was Hazrat Pilas,
The seventh (me) is miscalled a Rishi,
Do I deserve to be called a Rishi?
And if so what is my name?"

While the disciples of the Shaykh who were spread in every nook and corner of the valley also came to be known as Uwaysis[42] In his recreation of the role of Sufi Shaykh and the founder of a mystic order, Nural-Din defended the social authenticity of the Rishi tradition. Because the verses of the Shaykh about the Rishis of Yore seem to be definitely rooted in a homogenous body of folk consciousness[43]. The tradition about some of these rishis is deeply rooted in a homogenous body of folk consciousness." In this respect Prof. Khan has mentioned a very important fact that whenever a traditional Kashmiri mother wants to bless her child, she is often heard saying: "May you live life like Rum Rishi! He says further:- "And, indeed, there has always existed a strong belief in folk consciousness that Rum Rishi lived for 322 years. It is pointless to argue whether Rum Rishi had such a long span of life, for certainly he did not have it; but the folk belief in Rum Rishi's existence is important for a student of social history[44]."The reliance on local folk traditions for reconstructing a comprehensive and relatively society-oriented history seems more warranted especially when it appears that "we have reached a dead end in our researches in the history of Kashmir's Sultanate period!" (Preface to the second Edition, and when at the global level the pronouncements about the "End of History" are made. Thus this aspect of Muhibbual Hassan's book Shaykh very significant in the context of medieval history of Kashmir. It seems that Prof. Khan was very much influenced by this dimension of his teacher, which can be evidenced by his two important writings[45], However, for Prof. Khan, unlike his teacher "Such of the Sufi works as exist are" not "largely naïve tales of miracles performed by the saint and his disciples" and the former does not any difficulty in picking "out from them some telling facts relevant to historical investigation (Preface viii), to much consternation to the latter[46].Because contrary to the author's views that the songs of Lal Ded, mystical verses of Nur-ud-Din Rishi and the lyrics of Habba Khatun, throw "some light" on the social and cultural life of medieval Kashmir[47].Prof. Khan seems to tend to believe that these folklores, tradition of the valley and the mystical songs and lyrics throw "sufficient light on the social history of Kashmir.

Thus, Sufism in Kashmir was unique in the sense that unlike the central Asia, it accommodated Suharwardi, Naqashbandi and Qadri orders within the broader framework of Islam and developed its own school called Rishism, which was the culmination of the indigenous mystical ethos fruitioned into a universal phenomenon

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B N Parimoo, Saivmat aur rshyut in Rashid Nazki (ed.) ***Rishiyat***, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, 1992, p-71. Some people consider Nur-ud-Din Wali as the Mujadid, Ghulam Nabi Aatish, Kashir "Hazrat Shaykh Nur-ud-Din *Reshi Sandis* Kalamas Manz, Al-Qamar Kitab Ghar, Nanil Anantnag, 1997, p9. He has been likened to the great Muslim "puritan" reformers like Mohammed Ibn-e-Wahab, Shah Wali-ullah and Dr. Iqbl rather than mere recluse, i.e., Rashid Afaque, *The Ark, Transcreation of Sheikh Noor-u-Din Wali*, Rabani Book Stall, Sopore, 2003, p-12. He avoided giving any 'sectarian interpretation of Islam" op. cit.p. 20. He advocated the cause of equality of the human beings very vehemently, For example he says:

One who does believe creed and colour
Is, infact, a fool of first water?
His motto, easy come and easy go
On the day of Judgement he will find no defender
Your placement will be decided on godly deeds
None can excel him who breeds on that fragrance".

Moreover he exhorted people to avoid materialistic attitude to life.

Standing on a snare you are
How heedlessly you do behave!
Engrossed in worldly pleasure
Beware of the forments of grave.

He was initiated into the Awaisi Order, which does not require any Sufi mentor for a novice and rather a person can become its adherent without any allegiance of obedience. Later on he became initiated in the Kubariwiyah Order. P. Prof. Nooruddin Zahid, see Kalam Shaykh-al-Aalim, *Quran wo Hadith ki roshni main*, vol.I, Darul al-Qalam, Publications, Srinagar, Kashmir, N.D. p-2

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38.Rafuiqi, op. cit., p 133.. Some people consider Nooruddin Wali as the Mujadid Ghulam Nabi Aatish, Kashir, Hazrat Shaykh Nur-ud-Din Reshi Sandis Kalamas Manz, Al-Qamar Kitab Ghar, Nanil Ananatnag, 1997, p9. He has been likened to the great Muslim "puritan" reformers like Mohammed Ibn-e-Wahab, Shah Wali-ullah and Dr. Iqbal rather than mere recluse, Rashid Afaque, The Ark, transcreation of Sheikh Noor-u-Din Wali, Rabani Book Stall, Sopore, 2003, p-12.

39. It is on the basis of these verses that some researchers like Ghulam Rasool Bhat, consider Lal Ded a Muslim, who otherwise could not be regarded as a spiritual guide as an opostolic preceptor for a person none less than Nur-ud-Din, who was strictly conscious of the religious implications of such an aspiration. But professor Ishaq Khan and other scholars stillregard Lal Ded a "Hindu ascetic". Who was among the saints of the Indian subcontinent belonging to that group of saints that played a useful role in fostering common values among Hindus and Muslims in some appreciable degree". Ishaq Mohammad Khan, The Mystical Career and Poetry of Nur-ud-Din Rishi Kashmiri: Socio-Historical Dimensions, *Studies in Islam*, January/ April 1982,pp-101-102
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A Fresh Look at Some Kashmiri Women Poets

Neerja Mattoo

This paper will look at some of the major Kashmiri women poets from the 14th century to the present times, who in their own different ways have broken the so-called canon and made themselves heard as voices of proto-feminism. I am deliberately calling them voices rather than writers, because in the past the poetry of these women was not even written down, it was only because of their power to move that people heard them and formed their words into chants and songs which continue to be sung even now. In similar and dissimilar ways they broke from tradition, interrogated current practices and were not afraid to speak out against injustice whether at home or in society. Lal Ded, Ropa Bhawani, Habba Khatun, and Arnimal were all victims of male cruelty and domestic oppression. The first two refused to stay trapped in a power hierarchy with mother-in-law and husband in total control, relinquished home, went on a spiritual quest and were then known as saintly women, perhaps the only way in which a patriarchal society accepted abnormal behavior in women! The other two sang of their sufferings and thus recorded a permanent reproach to the insensitive men in their lives.

When we look to Kashmiri literature we have to take into account almost a thousand years of creativity mostly in times of upheavals, with only small periods of stability. The historical and political changes were momentous, altering the religious, linguistic, cultural and political landscape of the place and therefore could have provided a rich ore for writers to work upon and throw up jewels of observation. But our Kashmiri women poets, as worshippers of the lyrical Music with mystic or romantic orientations and thus absorbed in a private or personal sorrow may not have directly commented upon or questioned the politics of the times they lived in, least of all about the gender bias, but still in their verses we do find a reflection of the dominant mood and temper of their particular eras against which they subtly protested while highlighting the position of the marginalized in the society of the time. Through the choice of word and image, they point an accusing finger at the oppression at work at all levels.

Today the world is talking about conflict—ranging from big issues between nations and ideologies to every-day community, gender, class and caste hostilities. But we must also remember that literature no matter how rooted in an imaginary world it may be, seems to thrive on it, as it explores the full range of human emotions before presenting an alternative world-view and suggesting ways in which harmony between conflicting interests and forces can be restored. One of the ways is through understanding the situation-in-life of the 'Other', putting oneself in that situation to acquire a state of mind in which empathy rather than hostility prevails. The Nobel Prize winning Turkish novelist, Orhan Pamuk says somewhere that a writer must have the power to become the spokesperson of those who cannot speak for themselves, whose anger is never heard and whose words are suppressed. Our Kashmiri women facts are constantly striving to do so.

Literature looks at humanity with a questioning gaze as well as an affirmative gaze—disapproving and approving at the same time, reaffirming stereotypes as well as breaking them. Though writers are circumscribed by the times they live in—the very themes they choose must place them in that context—yet there is a prophetic quality in the work of great writers, a certain timelessness and universality. And this is what makes a canon. In general it is male writers who establish it and formulate a value system to judge literary work. But the interesting thing about Kashmiri literature is that it's first great literature was a women, Lal Ded and she set a standard that the best are still trying to match. Under the onslaught of globalization today the walls of the narrow grooves in which mankind in the evolution of civilization set itself, seem to be giving way. Not only is it due to the internet, the breaking down of trade barriers and the free movement of professionals through continents and countries, but translation of acclaimed literary texts has torn down the so far closed gates of languages. As a result, cultures are creeping into each other' so far exclusive spaces seamlessly and the so-called Keepers of Seals can do little about it. Concepts of racial superiority that both colonization and Brahminism made use of in order to perpetuate an oppressive system, are being blown to the winds. But at the same time the rising tide of an exclusivist, fundamentalist religious belief and practice is threatening to drown all the gains that came from barriers breaking down. One of the deepest roots of conflict lies in being obsessed with ones own self-interest without trying to reach out to others with compassion. The greatest gift which women poets have given us is their deep understanding of the human situation, their frank admission of the way they grappled with an oppressive system and how they resolved their inner and external conflicts. My purpose in this long introduction is to show that what the world is discovering today are the ideas that Lalded articulated boldly more than seven hundred years ago and which continue to flow in the work of contemporary poets like Bimla Raina and even Naseem Shafai in a living tradition. Three important pillars of society on whom its well being depends are its women, workers and religious teachers. I shall quote a few of Lalded *'vaakhs'* to show how her poetry forces us to alter our way of looking at these and their vocations. By bringing their work centre-stage through her choice of word and metaphor, she endows the marginalized with dignity, never ceases to interrogate attitudes, nudges us to question and even reject established practices and conventions. In her role of agency and advocacy, I think that long before the word became fashionable, Lalded actually took a subaltern view of history! In the process she takes us to the roots of all conflict: inequality and oppression, lack of respect for one another's beliefs and dogmatic thought. Let me begin with a well-known and oft quoted vaakh:-

Shiva chhuy thali thali rav zaan,
Mov zaan Heund ta Musalman,
Truk ay chhukh ta paan prav zaan,
Soy chhay Sahebas suti zainezaan.
(Shiva is everywhere–know Him as the sun.
Know not the Hindu different to the Muslim.
Know yourself, if wise, as a ray of that sun.
That alone is the way to know the Saheb).

Apart from the obvious idea of breaking down religious barriers by invoking the image of the sun shining upon everyone without distinction, notice how seamlessly Lalded hangs the Islamist valance of 'Saheb' to the apparent Saivite reference to Siva. The verse enacts, in its own syncretic idiom, the religious, mystic and linguistic synthesis it advocates.

While confirming patriarchal norms in her proverbial fortitude and patience, whether the authority is wielded by a man or women (in her case the mother-in-law), in later life she did walk out of the system that enforced them. And we find her re-writing philosophical ideas into a domestic idiom, a characteristic of proto-feminism in modern critical theory. In this context we find her often referring to home and the various activities within it, which have great important in a women's life using them as domestic metaphors. This is her way of acknowledging women and their role. Home in the following vaakh is used as a symbol of security from the buffets of the world:-

Aami pana sodras naavchhas lamaan
Kati bozi day myon meti diyi taar
Aamen taken poni chum shaman,
Zu chum bramaan gara gathsaha.
(With thread untwisted my boat I tow through the sea,
Would the Lord heed and ferry me across?
Water seeps through my bowls of unbaked clay,
Oh how my heart longs to go back home!)

Or let us look at the 'domesticity' of the metaphor of food in this vaakh, while driving the idea of moderation home:-

Somuy khe maali, somuy aasakh
Somuy khena mutsuranay baran taari,
Yava tuer tsali tim ambar heta
Kheudyava gali tim aahar an.
(Eat with temperance, and temperate you will be, my dear.
The doors shall be thrown open to the temperate!
Wear but enough to keep out the cold,
Eat but enough to kill the pangs of hunger)

The interrogative, ironic, irreverent voice in the next *vaakh* sounds so modern that it is hard to believe that it spoke in the 14th century:-

Tala chhuy zyus tay petha chhukh natsaan
Vanta maali khen kitha patsaan chhuy
Soruy sombrith yeti chhuy motsaan
Vanta maali ann kitha rotsaan chhuy

(A yawning oit at your feet and you dance?
How, my dear, do you digest the two?
All you accumulated, you'll leave behind,
Tell me my dear, how can you relish your food?)

Let us now look at her attitude to the other marginalized groups in society. The detailed descriptions of artisans' work in several of her vaakhs make us pause and marvel at the close attention she must have paid to the minutest details of their craft.

Damadam kormas damanhaale
Prazalyom deph ta naneyam zaath.
Andaryum prakash nebar thsotum
Gati manza rotum ta karmas thaph.
(The bellows pipe I pressed gently, muffling its breath,
The lamp lit, in its radiance I stood revealed.
I let the inner light burst out in the open,
Through the darkness caught hold of Him and would not let go.)

Lalded has no hesitation in choosing a metaphor from a blacksmith's forge to explain a subtle practice of Trikasastra, thus bringing the task of this lowly worker into focus. The underprivileged are acknowledged as it is to them that she turns for tools to explain her ideas to the general populace.

A similar spirit is work in the well-known verses:-

Lal ba drayas kapas poshi satsuy
Katsi tu dooni karnam yatsay lath
Tuy yeli khaernas zaeviji tuye
Vovuri vaana gayam alaenzey lath.
Dwobi yeli chhaevnas dwobi kani pethay
Saz ta saaban mathsnam yatsuy
Sutsi yeli phirnam hani hani kaetsuy
Ada Lali me praevum param gath.
(I, Lal, set out, hoping to bloom like a cotton flower,
But was beaten and trampled by ginner and carder,
Shredded and spun into so fine a yarn,
And hung and hit by the weaver on his loom,

Thrashed and kneaded on the washerman's stone,
Pasted and plastered with soap and clayey earth,
Till the tailor's skilful scissors worked on my limbs,
And I found my place in the Highest Abode!)

Literally a chronicle of the blows and buffets of life which mould and shape a personality, this vaakh works out the metaphor chosen, in an idiom to which the common man can easily pertake. This is no voice of a mystic who only lives in ethereal realms of the spirit, alienated from the ordinary life around her. Here is someone who sees notices and appreciates the role of everyone in society, no matter how lowly. She must have felt as one among the people involved in the job, right from the peasant who reaped the cotton crop, to the skilled artisans like the weaver and the tailor. The usefulness of everyone in this saga of creative evolution is duly acknowledged while tracing the journey of a fluff of cotton wool from the stage when it emerged from the safe cocoon of the closed seed to the final one when it is fashioned into protective clothing. It seems thus to have realized its full potential: that of serving a useful purpose in the natural scheme of things. It is through these images and metaphors from manual labour that she communicates to people directly without the agency of cerebral Brahmanism.

With regard to dogmatic religious teachers, this is what she has to say:-

Deev vatta divar vatta
Petha bon chhuy ikavaath
Poz kas Khatakh hota bhatta
Kar manas tu pavanas sangaath
(Your idol is stone, the temple a stone too-
All a stone bound together from top to toe!
What is it you worship, you dunse Brahmin?
True worship must bind the vital air of the heart to the mind.)

It is forceful condemnation of a self-delusion where a symbol becomes more important than what it is meant to represent. Fearlessly she confronts the priest, interrogates his practice and voices protest, on behalf of the poor, ignorant, voiceless masses. After Lalded, apart from Ropa Bhawani in the 17th century, for several centuries we hit a period of feeling rather than thought in women's writing. It may seem anaemic in comparison with lal Ded's full-blooded words, but the contribution of poets like Habba Khatun and Arnimal in the 16th and 18th centuries respectively, in highlighting the plight of women through their lyrics is major, though it does not have the radical, transforming power of Lalded's poetry.

One finds a very well-worked out device of the Epic simile, using the process of making ghee (an essential commodity while performing a yagya), in the following two vakhs of Ropa Bhavani:-

Mandh samudar don sani
Chhavak samadh nad-bindu tsath
Dan akhand milayo makhan
Sadikaris drayom gev
Tav roop yagya hoomas karith
Ahut ditsas angan hunz
Jyot parzane karan chyane
Mane atur ta nanyas bwoy
(Churn the milk of the mind, your Self the churner,
Locate the Primal Point and Sound. Break it down with the power of meditation.
Heat the butter of knowledge,
Spiritually empowered, you will find the ghee.
With these ingredients, a yagya I perform,
Offering the oblation of my own organs.
The flames that rise are your own effulgence.
In them my essence revealed, I stand as myself, finally.)

There is a deep concern for realization of ones true identity, to find the centre of ones being and then to rise above it, but the heaviness of the mystical concern is lightened by the use of a purely domestic metaphor.

...In the works of Habba Khatun and Arnimal we find nuances of a woman's sensibilities which only a woman can introduce, describing the many shades of suffering which only she has undergone. There is intense feeling, describing the pain of being a woman, whether as a tortured daughter-in-law or an abandoned wife. From Habba Khatun comes this passionate plea of a daughter:-

Unhappy I am in my in-laws' home,
Oh do something, my parental home!
Sent to fetch water I was one day,
But the pot, it broke, oh my parental home!
Buy me a new one or pay its price!
O my home!
When mother-in-law grabbed my hair,
It was for me worse than death!
Spinning on the wheel, I feel asleep,
And the wheel came apart, oh my home!

There is also strong protest at why their men do not understand their needs. In fact this is a recurrent theme in the poems of both Habba Khatun and Arnimal. The blame for neglect is squarely the man's the woman is waiting for expectations to be fulfilled, but that never happens. In these verses she does not hesitate to express a woman's sexuality in almost explicit words:-

Flowers of pomegranate I weave for you,
O come my love and revel in the blooms!
The earth is I and you the sky,
A covering for my secrets you are!
A delicacy is I and you the connoisseur,
O come my love and revel in the blooms!

But we must remember that Habba Khotun's voice here is not a mere passive submission to fate or a revething in victimhood but an expression of pride in her own attributes and a touch of pity for what the man is missing!

. Long before the subject of domestic violence came out of the closet and roused public opinion to force the Government to pass a law, we find Arnimal talking about it. Apart from speaking about the emotional and psychological violence and humiliation she has suffered at the hands of her husband, she also hints at physical violence. Instead of ranting against him she continued to wish him a long life, but still exposed his insensitive, unfaithful nature and cruelty to her, in very clear words but still exposed his insensitive, unfaithful nature and cruelty to her, in very clear words. I quote these lines from her:-

A summer jasmine was I, with ivory glow,
Now pale and yellow and lusterless, I wait
When will he come and show me himself?
Like the blue god he leaves me a Gopi forsaken,
Scorched and scarred, by taunting tongues eaten,
Will no one tell him or carry a whisper?
How I wait and long for him!
In sleep he grabbed my wrist, was anyone so deluded as I?
Oh maddened am I while the armband digs into my flesh.
One by one, he tore off my gold,
My ornaments were all pulled off.
Tell me o friend, whom can one trust?
How the armband digs into my flesh!

While the husband Bhawani Dass Kachru might have won some laurels from the Afghan court at Kabul for his learning and poetic skills, his name in Kashmir is for ever smeared by one woman's softly worded but powerful arraignment!

When we come to the present day writing in Kashmiri, we find women asserting their demands for space without any prescribed coyness. ....Naseem Shafai articulates the Eternal Woman's deep disappointment at the way men through myth and history have cast them, the rules that they have set down and to which they have notonly expected but demanded from women to conform. What if the rules were reversed, she asks? Her sweeping imagination weaves in a grand allusive design and we have a passionate, rather merciless expose of man's treatment of woman through different ages, cultural patterns and cultures. I quote a recent poem of hers to show how far a Kashmiri woman writer has traveled in her journey of de-constructing tradition, coming into the open and escaping from the constriction of veiled words:-

The Naked Truth

She was ecstatic, wasn't her beauty something to talk about?
She thought the world hung on her lips.
Slowly she saw—they were all, each one asking her,

"Open your eyes and look at me awhile,
Undo the laces at your throat and I will feel you, limb by limb
Throw open the secrets of your heart, and let go,
Show me the way to the new Islands taking shape,
Open your narcissus eyes, so I may find you by your scent,
Open the doors of your lips and let me feel the taste
Open the lined sheets held tight in your first,
Open the layers of your garments, one by one, so I will see you clear.
The two of us from primal times, are each other's life.
The two of us alone know the truth of it all, so why the distance?"
And she thought, "God! Do I have value?
Only when I know the truth of this word?"
And then she knew: 'Unite' and 'Open'—
The meaning of these words is the real miracle.
And then she knew—joy in beauty
An illusion, an unfulfilled desire.

Finally I would like to leave you with a *vaakh* of another contemporary poet Bimla Raina which hints at the power of love to resolve conflicts born out of dualistic antagonisms and restore equanimity of the mind and seems an appropriate thought for this……………

Lola amreth cho gali gale
Ada dil pholi pamposh zan
Duy baav soruy ywli ho gale
Ada no zanh dale man
Drink the nectar of love, sip by sip
And the heart will bloom lotus-like
Thoughts of duality will melt away
And never will your mind restless be.

Women in Kashmir As Rajatarangini Depicts
(A Socio-political Perspective)

Neelu Gupta

Kashmir is one of the most celebrated lands of the world. Nature itself, when creating the great oval valley and its encircling walls of high mountains, seems to have ensured to this territory a distinct geographical character[1]. As a result, it has given to people a sort of separate ethnic entity, a different history and a culture peculiar to them alone[2]. Yet it maintained the closest links with the rest of India both politically and culturally. In another respect also, the valley differs from the rest of sub-continent, while the Indian mainland cannot claim to have literary works dealing strictly with the history of its people in the 'historical sense' Kashmir can justly claim to have preserved its past in its numerous '*Rajatarangini*s'. Of these Kalhan's *Rajatarangini* is in its form the nearest approach to a regular work of history.

I have particularly chosen this topic because being a woman myself I wanted to explore our past through the eyes of a person who was not only a great historian but also great poet of his times.

Before discussing the role of Kashmiri women in the annals of history, let's have a glimpse of the position of women in Vedic period and the late ancient period. Women in early and somewhat later Vedic period occupied a dignified place in society and politics. They participated in the outdoor life as circumstances and situations demanded and there was hardly any prescribed position exclusively earmarked for men. During this period we come across reference to some women who excelled in learning and their hymns were included in the Vedas. Some of the distinguished women of that age were Lopammud, Ghosha, Paulomi and others. The notable philosopher of the time was Gargi. In the epic age, we have the examples of Kakeyi and Satyavati who played important political roles and also decided the issue of succession.

However, the absence of legal rights, polygamy etc tended to lower the status of women. But the Buddhists gave an honoured place to women in the social life of the country. A slow and steady but imperceptible decline in the position of women had begun with the advent of Huns, continuous invasions made the conditions in the Indo-Gangetic plain unsettled. The political instability, consequent migration of population etc. affected the women adversely. Infanticide, child marriage, sati, purdah system and prejudices against women education were some of the measures adopted by the Hindu society to save the honour of their women against invaders. All these measures hampered the progress of women in general.

In contrast, the Kashmiri women were highly respected. As Kalhan writes. "The wrath of even a single virtuous woman, deity or Brahman could cause havoc". Regarding their physical appearance, they have been compared to an ideal Roman beauty with their gazelle like eyes and flawless complexion. Hieun-Tsang (7th Century C.E.) and Marco Polo (13th Century C.E.) have paid great compliments to Kashmiri women whom they recorded as "beautiful."

SOCIAL STATUS

They enjoyed an equal status with men domestic and public life. This position of importance implies that women of at least upper classes received education of not only general nature but in diplomacy and statecraft, too. Bilhan praises the women of his native land who spoke Sanskrit and Prakrit fluently[3]. Their curriculum included the art of dancing, music and sex sciences. Moreover, they had to learn botany, painting, needle work, wood work, clay modeling, and cookery and receive practical training in instrumental music, singing and dancing[4]. Regarding the age of marriage, there is no evidence forthcoming from *Rajatarangini*. The girls were usually married when they attained puberty[5].

Inter-caste marriages remained in vogue from the early period down to the 14th century. The first historical inter-caste marriage celebrated was that of princess Ananglekha, daughter of King Baladitya in the 7th century C.E. to a commoner of unknown descent named Durlabhvardhana. His son, Durlabhaka also contracted marriage with a divorcee Baniya woman Narendraprabha. In view of the comparative relaxation in social norms, the attitude of the middle class could not have been as rigid as it was elsewhere in India.

Polygamy existed in Kashmir since early times and remained in vogue when *Rajataragini* was being written. Meghavahana was the first recorded king to have five wives. Lalitaditya Muktapida had three wives. Shankarvarman had married Sugandha but had other wives as well. Kshemagupta, the husband of Didda, had also married Chanderlekha and many more.

The system of keeping concubines was widely prevalent among the royalty and the aristocracy. A concubine did not carry any social stigma with her. Their off springs inherited the throne and commanded respect in the society. King Sussala had a son, Vigraharaja, from his mistress who became the Chamberlain[6].

As a wife, she participated in social and religious ceremonies in the company of her husband. He was bound to provide her all the comforts and maintenance[7]. Devoting to husband was considered as a "rule of dutiful conduct of women".

As a daughter-in-law, a women had to contend with a stern mother-in-law. An enlightened mother-in-law, Suryamati, is referred to have made her royal daughters-in-law to work like "serving maids"[8].

As a mother, she was the centre of her children's attention. If fate deprived the children of their father, they looked to her for guardianship. Her status can be judged by taking into considering the honour and respect given even to foster mothers.

POSITION OF WIDOWS

In Indian mainland the attitude towards windows presented shocking picture. But ***Kashmiriat*** had its own characteristics which were lofty and inspirational. They were never at any period forced to become ***Sati.*** Nor was the horrible practice of tonsure in vogue. They had property rights and lead an economically independent life. ***Widow-Remarriage*** was in vogue among the Shudra Verna of Society. It did not find favour with the caste Hindus. The Sati practice prevailed among royalty and other higher circles. The first queen to perish in flames was Vakpushta[9]. On the death of Shankarvarman, Surendraviti and two queens committed Sati. Shahi princess Bimba became Sati on the death of Tunga's son. Queen Suryamati burnt herself in company with her dead husband Ananta. There are numerous instances of women courageously facing all the ups and downs of life. Queens like Sugandha and Didda suffered widowhood but for the interests of their sons and state.

Rajatarangini tends to show that widow became heir to the immovable properties of her late husband and not his sons. Another passage appears to point out that women were owners of landed estates[10].

Literary evidence testify to the gross immorality and laxity of character prevailing among certain classes of women. *Rajatarangini* depicts in detail the licentious behaviour of the ladies of palace and the court. Other sources like Kuttanimata Kavya and Samyamatrika point out that prostitution existed as institution in the valley. The low standard of morality prevailing among certain classes gave rise to and fostered the growth of certain evil practices such as the institution of *Devdasi.*

Though slavery was not prevalent in Kashmir as an institution, there are stray references which reveal that there were slave girls during the period of Kalasa (1063 – 1089 C.E.). Earlier in Shankarvarman's time, the "sons of slave women" are referred to.

CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO ARCHITECTURE

The Kashmiri women displayed a great penchant for constructing buildings for religious and other purposes. The queens provided the lead in this sphere and other rich women too joined them. The Queens enjoyed unique status and privileges. They had their separate treasuries. Amritprabha, Yuka Devi, Indra Devi, the queens of Maghavahana built Viharas. Queen Ananglekha got a Vihara built known as Anangbhavana. Queen Narendraprabha, queen of Durlabhaka founded a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva Kamlavati, queen of Lalitaditya installed a large silver image of Kamalakeshav.

Guna Devi wife of Padha, a powerful man, built two mathas in the capital. Kavya Devi, wife of Suravarman, Minister of Avantivarman, founded the Shrine of Sadashive at Sureshvari.

After the death of Gopalvarman, his mother Queen Sugandha, founded the Gopalmatha and a shrine of Gopalkeshava. His widow, Nanda, also founded the Nandamatha and a temple of Nandakehsva. Sambavati, the courtesan of king Partha constructed Sambeshvara.

Queen Didda was also a great builder. After the death of her son, Abhimanyu, she is stated to have made sixty four foundations in different localities. Prominent among those are temples of Abhimnanyuswamin and Diddaswamin[11]. She also got constructed Diddamatha and got many monasteries built and repaired.

Queen Suryamati was also a notable builder was constructed temples and mathas. Her elder sister, Asamati, also founded a monastry in Tripureshvara, Queen Vasantlekha, wife of king Harsha, founded mathas at the holy Tripureshvara. Queen Jayamati wife of king Uchchwala, built a vihara and a matha. During Kalhan's own time, the construction activity was at its peak.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN URBANIZATION

The women founded markets and towns as well. Queen Kamlavati queens of Jaypida, founded towns of Kalyanpura and kamlapura respectively. Queen Sugandha founded the towns of Sugandhapura and Gopalpura. Queen Didda founded the towns of Diddapura and Abhimanyupura.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN POLITICS

Kalhan's poem proves that the ancient system of the Aryans who recognized the freedom of Women prevailed upto 12th century A.D. Seclusion or veiling of women was unknown even among the royalty. The queens were sprinkled with the sacred water of the coronation side by side with the kings who shared the throne with their consorts. Queens had separate funds, their own treasuries and councilors and were actively interested in the government of the country. They could send written orders to the state officials. They received the homage of feudatory chief's when they held open court[12]. *Rajatarangini* mentions a large number of women who successfully acted as regents and as independent rulers. Queens like Yasovati, Sugandha and Didda have left their mark. If occasion demanded, they also took up arms and led the troops. They also acted as peace mediators.

Yasovati is said to be the first regent queen of the valley. In the beginning of the tenth century C.E Sugandha acted as a regent for her son Gopalvarman. After his death, she assumed sovereign powers in her own hands. However, the court was ridden with factions. Sugandha (904-906 C.E) seems to have been fed up with factional bickerings at the court and she made up her mind to transfer authority to one of her relatives. However, she was outmaneuvered by Tantrins. They placed Partha, a ten year old boy, on the throne. In the process of deciding upon a successor, she lost her own power. She retired to Hushkapur. After sometime, she was brought back by Ekangas. The Tantrins defeated them and Sugandha fell into captivity. She was put under arrest and ultimately put to death[13].

Kalhana paints her character in a bad light. She is described as a woman of depraved character carrying on affairs with her minister Prabhakar. She also lacked the qualities of an astute diplomat. Towards the end of her career, it appears that she had lost popular backing.

Didda was one of the most remarkable rulers of medieval Kashmir. In the whole range of Kashmir and Indian history, there is no ruler as fascinating as Didda. She had been reckoned as one who can be compared with Catherine the great of Russia and Elizabeth I of England. She was strong, courageous and ruthless woman. She was tactful diplomat of the first order. It was no mean achievement of Didda to have dominated the scene for almost half a century. She was the queen of king Kshemagupta. She had the rare honour of getting her name inscribed on the coins. After the death of Kshemagupta in 958 C.E., she became the regent of her minor son, Abhimanyu.

During the period of regency which lasted upto 981 C.E., she had to face various revolts which she suppressed efficiently such as the revolts of Mahiman and Patala, nephews of her late husband, and of Yashodhara and of the Damaras. Her suspicious nature forced her loyal minister Narvahana to commit suicide. After the death of Abhimanyu II in 972 C.E. She retained the regency of her grandsons namely Nandigupta, Tribhuvanagupta and Bhimgupta whom she got killed one by one. She assumed sovereignty in 981 C.E. and ruled upto 1003 C.E[14].

Inspite of gross immorality and other defects of her character, her claim of being one of the ablest sovereigns can hardly be denied. The greedy Brahmins, unscrupulous landholders, conspiring nobles created problems for her. By bribing some, cajoling others, by wise and discriminaory distribution of wealth and favour, she drove the enemy, she won the opponents, she steered clear the ship of state through storms and stresses[15]. Her lust for power and laxity of morals are justly impeached by Kalhan but none can deny her due for the presence of mind, tactfulness, firmness of purpose and political sagacity[16].

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE BATTLEFIELD

Both the queens and ordinary women often accompanied their husbands in expeditions. Queen Sugandha accompanied her husband on expeditions and also took the field. While fleeing the country after an unsuccessful coup against Harsha, Vijaymalla was assisted by his wife.

WOMEN AS COMMANDERS

Silla, the mother of Vijaya, a supporter of king Sussala, (1111-1120, 1121-1128 C.E.) also took command of the royal forces at a critical time against the Lavanyas and died while fighting[17]. *Chudda* was another woman commander who had under her command her own soldiers and imperial troops[18]. She was a supporter of king Sussala and died a heroic death in the battle field fighting for the imperial cause.

ROLE OF WOMEN AS MEDIATORS

Kalhan has also recorded the role of queen *Bhuvanmati*, the wife of king Kaiasa (1063-1089 A.D.) who brought about reconciliation between Kalash and his son Harsha. When the covenant was flouted, the queen, who in the treaty of peace had been the surety, cut her throat and ended her life[19].

Thus in the end we can safely assume that in ancient and early medieval period the Kashmiri woman had their distinct identity and certain natural rights which they enjoyed and maintained with dignity and grace. They were empowered in the real sense of the term. Kalhan's Rajatarangini shows that Kashmiri women were not confined to home and hearth, which was the dominant trend in other parts of India. They participated in decision making process, literary activity and protection of the people of their own region. Their presence was realized by both men and women as it has been already mentioned that Kashmir enjoyed a distinct culture because of its physical environment. The contribution of women to the socio-political development of Kashmir became an inspiration for the common women throughout the ancient and medieval period.

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Approaches to Kashmir Studies

The Approaches to Kashmir studies comprises the Research papers, contributed by the experts, in the respective fields, to the international seminar organized by the Institute.

The papers selected for publication have been arranged in various subdivisions. Each subdivision represents a significant aspect of cultural History of Kashmir and each paper offers something seminal about the theme it deals with.